

1992

**The Early History of the
Western Pennsylvania Numismatic Society**
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by Wayne K. Homren

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INTRODUCTION

This history is based on information gleaned from various sources, including contemporary numismatic periodicals, auction catalogs, and Society publications. For many years the Society's original Proceedings books were lost, but these are now in the Society's possession. They have been invaluable in compiling the present work, and the author is indebted to the unknown individuals whose efforts saved these unique documents from the Wreck of Time. This paper outlines the history of the Society's early days, from its founding in 1878 through its decline and suspension in 1889.

OVERVIEW

Eight men met in Pittsburgh on June 14, 1878 to form the Western Pennsylvania Numismatic Society. The founders were a diverse group, united by a common interest in the study of numismatics. They included three clerks, a salesman, a tobacconist/coin dealer, a painter, a newspaper carrier, and a freshly-graduated college valedictorian and future millionaire.

The Society grew rapidly in its early years, and its members were very active. They quickly adopted a Constitution and set of Bylaws, and began forming a numismatic library and coin cabinet. To publicize the hobby of numismatics they set up a Society coin exhibit at the great Pittsburgh Exposition in 1878 and 1879. Souvenir medals were struck in each year to jointly commemorate the Exposition and the founding of WPNS.

The Society did not develop in isolation; its members subscribed and contributed to the various numismatic periodicals and auction sales from other cities. The Pittsburgh area was no numismatic backwater. There were at least four active coin dealers in Western Pennsylvania, and three of them were WPNS members. The first President of WPNS

catalogued a total of 13 sales of numismatic material for auctions held in Pittsburgh.

Society members were not without their differences. Disputes large and small arose among the members periodically. Separate incidents led to the expulsion of two of the founding members within a year. In 1882 the Society would expel another founder.

Other founders were lost for the more usual reasons: sickness, death, or the lack of time or interest to continue numismatic activity. One founder sold his coin collection in 1879 and resigned from the Society in 1880. Another founder resigned in 1882, apparently to devote more time to his business affairs. The companies he founded made him one of the wealthiest men in the country, providing him the resources to resume his hobby in a big way at a later date.

Like this prodigal founder, WPNS itself went through a period of dormancy. Its membership dwindled in the 1880's, and in 1889 the remaining members voted to dissolve the Society. But the fire of numismatics was not extinguished; its embers smoldered through this dark period and after two decades the Western Pennsylvania Numismatic Society was rekindled under its original constitution with several of its old members and founders back in the fold. The Society has continued to this day, its members meeting monthly to share their numismatic knowledge and fellowship.

This paper summarizes the history of the first golden age of the Western Pennsylvania Numismatic Society, and is dedicated to the gentlemen who made up its membership through 1889. These men were the pioneers of numismatics in Western Pennsylvania. They blazed a trail still followed by the like-minded travelers of today.

THE FOUNDERS

S. H. Morgan

The first President of the Society, S.H. Morgan is best known today as Pittsburgh's most prolific 19th-century coin cataloguer. Between March 11, 1879 and July 27, 1881, Morgan authored thirteen auction catalogues for coin sales held in the offices of D.F. Henry at 68 Fifth Avenue in Pittsburgh. Morgan's own coins were in turn auctioned by John Haseltine in January 1880, and W. E. Woodward in April 1882.

Little else is known about Morgan. He may be the Samuel Morgan listed as a tobacconist in the 1878 Pittsburgh city directory. The November 14, 1879 WPNS meeting was held at Morgan's home at Millvale Station, P.R.R. (Pennsylvania Rail Road). The 1880 WPNS Constitution and Bylaws booklet lists

Morgan's address as Elm Street, Sixteenth Ward. In Woodward's 1882 catalog Morgan is identified as a resident of Louisville, KY.

Morgan was apparently an older gentleman. He had been around numismatics long enough to have the knowledge required to catalogue so many coin sales. He was obviously respected by his fellow founders, who elected him their first President.

He had enough free time in 1878 and 1879 to attend each day of the monthlong Pittsburgh Expositions. Morgan left Pittsburgh in 1881 and the following year sold his coin collection. All of these facts seem to indicate that Morgan was retired or semi-retired at the time WPNS was organized.

Frank J. Kirk

The first Vice-President of WPNS, Frank J. Kirk was part owner of a painting business, Wilson & Kirk, with offices at 84 Fourth Avenue. His home address was 149 Wylie Avenue; this address was listed in the 1880 Constitution booklet. Little else is known about Kirk. His coin collection was catalogued by Morgan in June, 1879. The collection included mainly U.S. coins, plus assorted foreign coins, medals, and some colonial currency. The bulk of the collection consisted of a date set of cents and half cents from 1793 to 1857, plus some varieties. The highlight of the sale was lot 34, a fine 1793 Liberty Cap cent, which brought \$9.00. The total sale realized \$89.95. Kirk resigned from the Society in December 1880. He apparently remained in Pittsburgh, since he was still listed in the 1890 city directory.

George W. Rode

The first Secretary of the Society, George Rode occupied the position for most of the Society's first eleven years. If any one individual deserves special recognition for service to the Society during its formative years, it is George Rode. Then as now, the Secretary is the workhorse of the Society, writing minutes of every meeting, and handling correspondence with other collectors and Societies.

As this paper will show, Rode's correspondence on behalf of the Society was extensive. He exchanged letters with the American Numismatic Society in New York, and publicized the Society's formation and activities via the editors of various contemporary numismatic periodicals. Without these precious records, little would be known today of the existence of the band of coin enthusiasts who created the Western Pennsylvania Numismatic Society.

Rode is listed as a clerk in the 1878 Pittsburgh city directory, working at 49 Fifth Avenue. It is not known what

type of business Rode was in. This work address is where Rode recieved his numismatic correspondence, and is the address listed in the 1880 Constitution booklet. By 1899 Rode was listed as a cashier at 255 Fifth Avenue, living at 38 Hazelwood Avenue.

Rode became charter member number 12 of the American Numismatic Association, and was nominated by founder George Heath to serve on the organization's "Board of Temporary Organization." Rode also served as the A.N.A.'s Superintendent of Exchange in 1891-1892. At the October 1, 1892 A.N.A. Convention in Pittsburgh, he served as Secretary.

E. F. Maynard

Elbert F. Maynard was the Society's first Treasurer. He had several occupations over the years. In the year of the Society's founding, he was listed as a clerk at 148 Third Avenue. His address as listed in the 1880 Constitution booklet was a post office box. By 1890 Maynard was listed in the Pittsburgh city directory as the proprietor of Hotel Crescent at 16 Smithfield Street. By 1899 he was listed as a salesman at 717 Liberty Avenue, making his home on Ridge Avenue in Allegheny.

R. W. Shipman

Robert W. Shipman probably qualifies as the earliest known coin cataloger in Western Pennsylvania. He cataloged a 12-page, 359-lot sale for the D. F. Henry auction house, on January 28th, 1879 (two months before Morgan's first sale). The sale contained ancient Roman coins, U.S. coins and medals, and foreign coins including siege pieces. This is the only sale known to be cataloged by Shipman. He was later a charter member of the A.N.A. (member #79).

Henry McKnight

Little is known about Henry McKnight. He is listed as a clerk in the 1878 Pittsburgh city directory. Elected Treasurer of WPNS in June 1882, he also took over as Secretary when George Rode resigned the position on March 2, 1883. At the June 1883 business meeting he was offically elected to both positions. Rode returned to the Secretary's position in 1884. McKnight served as curator from June 1886 until the Society's dissolution in 1889. He also became a charter member of the A.N.A. (member #51), and presided over the A.N.A.'s October 1, 1892 Convention in Pittsburgh.

John Rivett

John Rivett was the son of Eliza and Nathaniel Rivett, who ran a news depot as early as 1860 at 709 Penn Avenue. In 1878 Nathaniel ran a variety store at 625 Penn Avenue. There is no listing for John Rivett that year, but it is assumed he worked at the family store. By 1890 Nathaniel and John were listed as "paper carriers" at 6021 Rodman Street in East Liberty. By 1890 his father had passed away, and John was listed as a "circulator" at the home he shared with his mother at 315 N. Sheridan Avenue.

George H. Clapp

At the age of 19, Clapp was probably the youngest of the eight founders, having just graduated from college in 1877. He had attended the Western University of Pennsylvania, (later renamed the University of Pittsburgh). His scholarship and talents were well-recognized at the time: Clapp graduated first in his class and delivered the commencement address. An enterprising lad, he had made an arrangement with the keeper of a nearby toll bridge to search his till for strange coins and old coppers. We can only wonder today if his fellow WPNS founders realized the extent to which Clapp would succeed in his later endeavors in numismatics, science, and business.

Born on December 14, 1858 in Allegheny City, Clapp developed an early interest in science. As a young man he worked for several years in the machine shop of the Penn Cotton Mill, then became a chemist at the Black Diamond Steel Works. There he became an assistant to Capt. Alfred E. Hunt, a metallurgist of note, who was just three years older than Clapp. In 1883 the two set out on their own, forming Hunt & Clapp, a firm of consulting engineers.

In 1888 the men met Charles Martin Hall, a young inventor who had recently discovered an electrolytic process for reducing aluminum. Previous methods of extracting aluminum from ore were very expensive, and the two were quick to realize the tremendous potential of Hall's process. With friends, they formed the Pittsburgh Reduction Company, which later became the Aluminum Corporation of America (ALCOA).

Clapp served the corporation for many years as its Treasurer, Secretary, Vice President, and member of the Board of Directors. The original Hunt & Clapp partnership became the Pittsburgh Testing Laboratory, where Clapp served as president. Clapp was also the first president of the firm which became Fischer Scientific Corporation. All three companies are still very much in business today.

He also served at times as a director of the Reliance Life Insurance Company and the Farmer's National Bank of Pittsburgh. He was a member of the Board of Trustees of the Carnegie Museum of Natural History from 1909 until his death

forty years later. In addition to his numismatic interests Clapp was an accomplished conchologist (a student of shells). His collection of 150,000 items was donated to the Carnegie Museum.

Clapp was the oldest living alumnus of the University of Pittsburgh, and he made many generous contributions to its growth. He served as President of its Board of Trustees for 47 years. Clapp Hall, a science building, was erected on the campus in his honor.

He made his home on Woodland Road near Sewickley, and maintained a summer residence at Kennebunkport, Maine. He passed away on March 31, 1949 at the age of ninety.

Clapp will be forever known in numismatic circles for his extensive contributions to the study of Early American Coppers. His detailed studies of die varieties on early cents were incorporated into the classic reference, Early American Cents, published by William Sheldon in 1949. Clapp's own work was made available previously in his self-published 1931 work, The United States Cents of the Years 1798-1799, and his 1947 collaboration with Howard Newcomb, The United States Cents of the Years 1795-1796, 1797, and 1800.

MEETINGS

In the early years of WPNS, meetings were held weekly. At the first organizational meeting on June 14, 1878, it was resolved "that Friday be adopted as the regular meeting night." The first Bylaws formalized this arrangement, stating that "the regular meetings shall be held every Friday night at 8 o'clock P.M." The location of these first meetings is unknown, but it is likely that they took place in downtown Pittsburgh.

On occasion, the Society met at the home of a member. The first of these special meetings took place on November 1, 1878, at the "residence of President Morgan, Millvale Station P.R.R." The town of Millvale is now part of the City of Pittsburgh, across the Allegheny River about 5 miles upstream from The Point. Perhaps members travelled to the meeting aboard passenger trains of the Pennsylvania Rail Road.

On the following Friday (November 8) the Society convened at the home of E. F. Maynard. On November 29th and December 20th the Society was hosted by F. J. Kirk. Two special meetings were held at the Pittsburgh Exposition Society buildings on September 4th and 20th.

Throughout 1878 the eight founders continued to meet as

scheduled. George Rode and F. J. Kirk were present at every meeting, and S. H. Morgan missed just one. The typical meeting consisted of six of the eight founding members. Clapp was absent the entire summer. He attended for the first time on August 30th, but was a regular for the remainder of the year.

The First Constitution

The only recorded business at the first meeting was the election of officers, adoption of the name of the Society, and the selection of Friday as the regular meeting night. At the second meeting (June 21, 1878) the first Constitution and Bylaws were adopted. The Constitution, as neatly recorded in George Rode's hand, consisted of just five articles, reproduced below:

Constitution of The Western Pennsylvania Numismatic Society

Adopted June 21st, 1878

Article I

The Society shall be known as "The Western Pennsylvania Numismatic Society"

Article II

The objects of this Society shall be -

1st. For the purpose of exchanging views on the different Coins and Medals of the United States and foreign countries.

2nd. The improvement of our minds on Numismatics.

3rd. The formation of a Library and Cabinet relating to the study of the same.

Article III

The officers of this Society shall be a President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. The officers shall be elected at the last meeting in June.

They shall hold office for one (1) year from the first day of July, following.

Article IV

The dues shall be Twenty-five (25) Cents a month.

Any member who is indebted to the Society for more than three (3) months dues, shall be suspended until all his dues have been paid.

Article V

The Society shall not be dissolved as long as five (5) members remain, except with the consent of all the members.

A Year of Firsts

The first item of Society business following the organizational issues was to purchase and auction a collection of coins belonging to one of the members. Apparently this was done as a "fund raiser" for the new organization. The minutes of the June 21st, 1878 meeting record a resolution "that the President be authorized to buy the collection of American Coins from Mr. Maynard for Twenty (20) Dollars. Resolved, that the above collection be sold at auction at the next meeting." On June 28th "Mr. Morgan was appointed auctioneer to sell the collection of Coins bought from Mr. Maynard. The collection was then sold, and the Secretary reported that it brought \$33.36." At the following meeting (July 5th) "a warrant was drawn for Twenty (20) Dollars to pay for the coins sold..."

The First Acquisitions

The Society quickly began working toward the goals set out in Article II of their Constitution; the first acquisitions for the Society Library and Coin Cabinet occurred in June and July 1878. At the June 28th meeting, "The President reported that he had received a copy of the Constitution and By-Laws of the American Numismatic and Archaeological Society and donated the same to the Society." At the same meeting the Secretary was instructed to "subscribe for one (1) year to the American Journal of Numismatics." A warrant in the amount of \$2.00 was drawn to pay for the subscription. At the July 5th meeting it was resolved that "the Society purchase a proof set of 1878 (minus the 20c piece,) for Four Dollars and Fifty Cents (\$4.50)..."

The Pittsburgh Exposition

The early history of the Western Pennsylvania Numismatic Society is intimately connected with the Pittsburgh Exposition of 1878. WPNS members promoted their Society and the hobby of numismatics via a coin display at the Exposition, and they produced and sold the first WPNS medal in conjunction with the

exposition. Sadly, the Exposition was also the backdrop for a disagreement among the members, leading to the expulsion of one of its founding members.

The Pittsburgh Exposition Society was founded in 1875 for the purpose of promoting Pittsburgh products. Much like a World's Fair, several exhibition buildings were erected in Allegheny City. An advertisement in the June 22, 1878 Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette announced that the Exposition would be held from Tuesday, September 3rd through Saturday, October 5th of that year.

On July 5th, 1878 a committee consisting of Shipman, Rivett, & Morgan "was appointed to see what arrangement can be made with the Pittsburgh Exposition Society to place a collection of Coins on exhibition at their next Exhibition."

The Society's efforts were publicized nationally via an article appearing (belatedly) in the November 1878 issue of the Coin Collector's Journal.

Pittsburgh possesses one of the most energetic numismatic societies that we know. Its members are interested in the science and desire to spread a knowledge of it all around, that the pleasure and profit they receive may be known by others. During the present year there is in Pittsburgh an exposition, and the society have wisely siezed the opportunity for awakening an interest in numismatics by placing on exhibition its collection of coins and medals. Thousands will thus learn that there are persons who take a pleasure in the study of coins, many of whom will catch the infection and be led in turn to become centres for awakening an interest in others. Many who know a little about coins, or who having by them a handful of old coppers as curiosities, will be led to looking into them, and may possibly find some rare coins in their little hoard. Such a result will certainly lead to a great increase in the membership of the society, and who knows but that some of these days the society will be showy enough to propose a Numismatic Loan Exhibition to which collectors might go from all parts of the land. We wish the society all success and wish that ts activity may never decrease.

To commemorate this exhibition of their coins, a white metal die, by Geo. H. Lovett has been issued, having obverse a laurel wreath enclosing the words in three lines, FOUNDED JUNE 14TH, 1878, and outside, running all round, WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA NUMISMATIC SOCIETY, with PITTSBURGH, PA., in the exergue. On the obverse is a view of the Exposition building with PITTSBURGH EXPOSITION SOCIETY above and EXPOSITION of 1878 below.

On July 19 the committee reported "that they had secured the

exclusive right to sell the medals at 8%, and that they had paid the entrance fee of \$5.00." No mention of medals is made earlier in the minutes, but obviously the subject had been discussed. Minutes of the next several meetings state only that the committee "reported progress."

An advertisement in the August 24th Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette reported that plans for the 1878 Pittsburgh Exposition were complete. "In addition to a vast display in the provinces of Art, Mechanics, Agriculture, Floriculture, Inventions, &c, There will be the following SPECIAL ATTRACTIONS, Which have been secured by the management without regard to expense:

"Dr. W. F. Carver, will exhibit his prodigious skill as a rifleman daily, illustrating his marvelous powers by breaking glass balls in the air, cutting coins, lead pencils &c., using a Winchester Rifle."

"The Great Automatic Wonder, the German's Dream, consisting of 40 moving and working figures has been secured, and will daily afford an endless fund of delight for old and young. "

"The Illuminator of the Future, Electric Lights, will be one of the novel and interesting features of the coming Exposition. The Floral Hall will lighted throughout every evening by this means and will add brilliance to every effect." (Thomas Edison's invention of the electric light bulb occurred in 1877, just one year earlier).

The Exposition Caretaker Affair

On Monday evening, September 2nd (the night before the Exposition opening) the Society held a special meeting at the Exposition Building in Allegheny. Present were members Morgan, Maynard, McKnight, Clapp, Shipman, Rivett, Kirk, and Rode, "but owing to the lateness of the evening, no business was transacted."

On Wednesday evening, September 4th, another special meeting was held at the Exposition building. The members were present, except for Henry McKnight and John Rivett. The meeting had been called at the request of several members. Mr. Morgan stated the purpose of the meeting to be for the "election of a person to take charge of the collection of coins at the Exposition."

Mr. Morgan offered to attend to the collection and sell medals for \$1.00 per day; and one half (1/2) of the net profit on all medals sold, after the first two thousand (2000)." The motion passed, and the Society voted to pay John Rivett \$5.00 "for his services during the present week." The members also resolved to hold no regular meetings during the term of the Exposition.

On September 20th however, a special meeting was called to read the following letter:

As Mr. John Rivett has committed an act unworthy of a gentleman by removing his coins and medals from the exposition, where the Society in common had their coins on exhibition, for the reason that the Society did not give him the position in charge of the coins, as they did not think him competent to take charge of and do the business of the Society desired; We, the undersigned members of the Society do hereby deem him unworthy of membership and will vote at the next meeting to expell him from the Society.

The letter was signed by Maynard, Clapp, Kirk, and Rode. The next Society meeting did not take place until October 11th, following the close of the Exposition. Mr. Rivett was duly expelled.

The 1878 Exposition Medal

E.F. Maynard ordered the medals from engraver George H. Lovett on behalf of the Society; he was later reimbursed \$85.00 for the dies and planchets. Medals sold at the exposition were in white metal. The Carnegie Museum of Natural History owns a white metal specimen of the medal which has apparently been shot through with a bullet. Evidently this piece is evidence of Dr. Carver's sharpshooting talents.

It is not known how many were struck or how much they were sold for at the Exposition. However, total sales of \$138.30 were reported on October 11th. The minutes also note that 22 medals were on hand at that time. If the medals were priced at 15 cents, then 922 were sold. If they were sold at just 5 cents, then 2,766 were sold. Morgan had requested a share of profits after the first 2,000 medals sold, but this was back at the beginning of the Exposition.

The Society resolved to sell the remaining 22 medals for the benefit of the Society at no less than 25 cents each. Also, "Mr. Maynard presented the Society with a silver exposition medal, for which the thanks of the Society were voted."

At the September 20th meeting the Secretary had been "instructed to present one of the Society's medals to the various Numismatic Societies; and also to Messrs. Scott & Co. and Geo. H. Lovett, Esq." At the October 18th meeting letters of thanks were read from the Boston Numismatic Society, the American Numismatic and Archaeological Society, and the Numismatic and Antiquarian Society of Philadelphia.

On October 25th the Secretary read a letter from Mr. Lovett offering "to strike Copper Exposition Medals for 20cts each,

and in Silver for \$1.00 each." The Society resolved to make 25 copper medals, 15 brass, and 7 silver. This would make a total of at least 8 silver medals, since Maynard had already donated one to the Society Cabinet. It makes sense that only eight were struck altogether (one for the Society, and one for each of the founders, except Rivett).

The Society further resolved that the obverse die be cancelled after the above medals were struck. The medals were recieved by the Society by the November 15th meeting. On November 22nd a letter from Mr. Lovett was read, attesting to the number of medals struck. Secretary Rode reported that the obverse die had been cancelled.

The First New Members

The Society did not add its first new member until the last meeting of 1878. Five more members were added in quick succession, bringing the roster to thirteen by the end of January, 1879. The new recruits were as diverse as the founders. Their occupations were notary public, cigar manufacturer, hotel manager, clerk, and jeweler.

E. G. Comingo (December 27, 1878)

Edward. G. Comingo was listed as a notary public at 158 Fourth Avenue in the 1878 Pittsburgh city directory. He made his home at Forbes and Dithridge in the 14th Ward. Residing at the same address were Isabella Comingo (widow of Henry) and the Rev. Neville B.C. Comingo.

The July 17, 1878 Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette reported that Comingo's home had been burglarized the previous month.

Wm Cella is charged before Alderman Reilly with breaking and entering into the house of E. G. Comingo, Esq. at Bellefield on the 29th ult., and feloniously appropriating a gold watch and other articles of jewelry to the value of \$125. The accused was arrested and jailed for a hearing tomorrow.

Ferdinand Sermin (January 10, 1879)

A cigar manufacturer, Ferdinand Sermin was listed in the Pittsburgh city directory as early as 1860, doing business at 423 Liberty Avenue. In 1878 the directory lists his business as "cigars and tobacco" at 416 Forbes. Sermin was still active in his business as late as 1890, where he was listed at 496 Forbes. Working at the same address was Fred Sermin, a clerk (probably Ferdinand's son). Sermin was elected

Treasurer of WPNS in June 1883, and was re-elected to the position each following year through 1889.

W. R. Haslett (January 17, 1879)

Virtually nothing is known of William R. Haslett. There are three different W. Hazletts listed in the 1878 city directory. In 1890 there are two William R. Hasletts, one employed at the Pittsburgh Label Company.

J.E.H. Kelley (January 17, 1879)

J.E.H. Kelley was the manager of the Monongahela House hotel at Smithfield and Water streets by 1890. He was not listed in the 1878 city directories, but the 1880 Constitution lists his address as the Home Hotel, Duquesne Way. The September, 1879 issue of Mason's Coin Collector's Herald lists Kelley as a subscriber, along with George Rode, Major C. P. Nichols, the "Western Numismatic Society", William Poillon, Robert Coulton Davis, R. W. Zabriskie, and 50 other pioneering numismatists.

Sidney F. Murphy (January 31, 1879)

In 1878 Sidney F. Murphy worked as a clerk at Tenth and Penn. In 1890 the city directory lists him as a bookkeeper working at 58 Sixth street. He made his home at the Haysville station of the P. F. W. & C. Ry (Pittsburgh, Fort Worth, and Cheasapeake Railway ??)

A. C. Gies (January 31, 1879)

A. Charles Gies was a jeweler and optician, who began collecting coins in 1864. He was not listed in the 1878 city directory, but appears in the 1890 directory at 52 Frankstown Ave. He later moved his business to 6260 Frankstown Avenue.

In a letter contained in the WPNS archives, he recalled the beginnings of his collection of "the war tokens and store cards of Pittsburgh." Gies stated that he "started to collect these mementoes of our Early Store Keepers when small change was very scarce. I knew where all these stores were. (I) was in some of them when I was a boy, and in after years got acquainted with some of those that issued these coins during the period of the Civil War, among which I mention Mr. Buffum." Gies had built a collection of 95 varieties of Pittsburgh Civil War store cards in copper, brass, white metal, nichel, and paper.

Gies was elected a trustee of the A.N.A. in 1904. He attended the Chapman's Stickney sale in Philadelphia (June 25-29, 1907), taking a trolley excursion to Fairmont Park one evening with Dr. Louis Comparette of the Philadelphia Mint, Virgil Brand, Ben Green, Thomas Elder, Edgar H. Adams, Farran Zerbe, and others. In September of that year Gies joined 27 fellow numismatists for the A.N.A. Convention in Columbus, Ohio. He is pictured in the front row of the official convention photograph, along with Heath, Zerbe, Green, Elder, and S.H. & H. Chapman. Gies brought with him an 1816 half dollar, which he sold at the convention.

It was reported in the October 1911 Numismatist that while on a trip through the Rocky Mountains Gies acquired an 1861 Parsons & Company \$5.00 gold piece (only 4-6 pieces are known today).

Gies collected all U.S. coins, but specialized in half dollars, discovering many die varieties not listed in the standard reference of the day, the Haseltine Type Table catalogue.

As reported in The Numismatist, Gies attended the 1924 Cleveland A.N.A. convention, where he and fellow Pittsburghers (and WPNS members) Gottlieb Kraft and Perley W. Locker "were inseperable conventionites. They are a long-time friendly trio of rivals for die varieties of the early United States half dollars. What they did not have on public display they had to show in private. Based on their combined table of varieties, a new 'type table' is in order."

George Clapp, in a letter to the Society written July 2, 1938 (in response to a letter notifying Clapp of his nomination as an Honorary member) stated "this is an unexpected honor and while I am the only living "Charter Member" I feel that the honor should have gone to "Charlie" Gies, the man who has held the Society together, and done the real work, in doing so, these past sixty years."

At the time his half dollar collection was auctioned by Stack's in 1940, Gies was the oldest living collector in the United States.

Business As Usual

Society meetings continued uneventfully through January. The Society continued about its business of exhibiting and discussing coins at each meeting. Further additions were made to the Society Library and Coin Cabinet. George Rode donated a copy of the Director of the Mint's Report for 1878. Frank Kirk donated "a priced catalogue of his sale of Dec 30th 1878." (This is a mystery - John Adams does not list any auction catalog dated Dec 30th, 1878, although there is a Haseltine sale on Oct 30, 1878). On January 17th, 1879 the

Society elected to subscribe to the Coin Collector's Journal. On January 24th the Society voted to purchase a priced catalog of the Mickley sale.

On March 7th, attempting to fill the hole in its proof set, the Society resolved "to bid \$4.50 on the 20 cent piece (lot 622) of 1878 in the sale of March 14th." (This probably refers to the S. K. Harzfeld sale held on that date. A copy exists in the Carnegie Library collection). Mr. Kelley placed the bid on the Society's behalf. On March 21st, Secretary Rode reported that the lot had been won at the price of \$4.25.

On May 23rd, the Society voted "to bid \$9.00 on Crosby's Early Coins of America, to be sold at auction in Harzfeld's sale of June 5th and 6th." President Morgan reported at the June 13th meeting that the bid had not been successful. On July 2nd Secretary Rode was authorized to purchase a copy of Crosby for \$9.00. On July 11th a warrant for \$9.30 was drawn to pay for it (this amount apparently included postage). "The Curator was instructed to have the above copy of Crosby Early Coins of America bound."

The Notorious Jonas Adler and the Black Ball Rule

On February 21st, 1879, Mr. Jonas Adler was proposed as a member of the Society. Adler was a part-time coin dealer who would later catalog an auction sale at the D.F. Henry auction house on April 30, 1879.

"The President appointed Mr. J.E.H. Kelley as teller - a vote then being taken and Mr. Kelley announced that more than three (3) votes had been cast in the negative." Members Morgan, McKnight, Kelley, Gies, Sermin, Shipman, Kirk, Comingo, and Rode were present. Article VII of the Society Bylaws states that three negative votes shall prevent the election of a prospective member.

Apparently Mr. Adler had already developed a reputation for himself. His coin sale of April 1879 would be his first and last auction. Ed Frossard wrote in the July 1879 issue of Numisma:

Dealers sending coins on approval to Mr. Jonas Adler, Pittsburgh, PA., will do well, if they wish to assure a safe delivery, to address the distinguished coin dealer in care of one of the Town Justices, or of the Sheriff of the County.

The September 1879 issue of Mason's Coin Collectors' Herald included an open letter to Adler:

You seem to be doing a wholesale coin business on credit; but in reply to your many solicitations we say patronize those who give 30 days and send us cash at half price you pay on credit. Perhaps the credit system pays you best.

The November 1884 issue of Numisma states:

Jonas Adler, Pittsburgh, PA., has been rustivating at Claremont Springs, at municipal expenses for swindling a Fifth Ave., cigar dealer in a transaction of old coins. A.A.A. No. 1, first-class preferred petty swindler. Coin collectors, beware of Jonas!

The Ramsden Matter

Another debate over membership began on March 21st, when Thomas Ramsden was proposed for membership. Ramsden was probably in middle age, having been listed in the 1860 Pittsburgh City directory as a gas fitter, living on Federal Street near Lacock in Allegheny City. The 1878 directory listed him as a plumber. No action on Ramsden's membership application was taken at that meeting.

At the following meeting (March 28, 1879) a committee consisting of Kirk, Shipman, and Gies was appointed "to report on the advisability of admitting Mr. T. Ramsden as a member." On April 18th the committee "reported adversely." Still, no action on Ramsden membership application was taken, although Albert Glockner was elected at the same meeting.

During the same time period the name of J. R. Bingler was proposed and later withdrawn (by Mr. Sermin).

More New Faces

Despite the problems with other proposed members, the second quarter of 1879 saw four men added to the membership rolls. This batch included a liquor dealer, another clerk, and another coin dealer.

Albert Glockner, Jr. (April 18, 1879)

Albert Glockner Jr. was a liquor dealer, operating at 32 Sixth Street. Glockner apparently inherited the family business from his father (Albert Sr.) and uncle Leopold, who were listed in the 1860 Pittsburgh City Directory as A. Glockner & Bro., wholesale importers of wines and liquor at 32 St.

Clair Street. (this is the same address - the name of the street was changed in the meantime).

A. J. Rogers (May 2, 1879)

A. J. Rodgers was listed as a clerk at 169 Irwin Avenue, Allegheny, in the 1878 Pittsburgh City Directory. An Alfred J. Rodgers, also a clerk (for the Union Line) was listed in the 1890 directory. It is not known whether Alfred is the A. J. Rogers who belonged to WPNS. Rodgers acted as an agent for buyers at Morgan's auction sales. His name is listed on the covers of the 10/16/1879 and 12/23/1879 sale catalogs.

Robert D. Book (May 16, 1879)

The 1878 Pittsburgh City Directory lists Book's occupation as coin dealer, at 71 Beech Avenue, Allegheny. By 1890 he is listed as a teller for the First National Bank, living at 5 Lincoln Avenue in Allegheny.

David J. White (June 13, 1879)

Nothing is yet known of David J. White. There are four David Whites listed in the 1878 Directory. One is an engineer, but there is know way of knowing which White belonged to WPNS.

The Rogers/Shipman Affair

On May 23rd, just three weeks after his election as a member, A. J. Rogers submitted a letter "preferring charges against Mr. R. W. Shipman." At the following meeting Mr. Comingo offered the following resolution, which after a long debate, was adopted:

Whereas, by a letter presented in open meeting of this Society on May 23rd, 1879, Mr. A. J. Rogers preferred certain charges against Mr. R. W. Shipman; both of whom being members of this Society; and

Whereas, the acts charges are not denied by Mr. Shipman in any material point, either in matter or form; and

Whereas, said R. W. Shipman refuses to make any adequate settlement of this matter, or to submit the same to be arbitrated by this Society or by a commitee selected impartially by its members; and

Whereas, the charges being swindling and other conduct unbecoming a gentleman or member of this Society, therefore

Resolved, that if said R. W. Shipman persists in his determination to refuse to arrange this matter with Mr. Rogers, to his satisfaction, or submit it to arbitration in this Society, that his name be stricken from the roll of the members at its next regular meeting.

At the following meeting, however (June 13th) it was resolved "to take no action in the Shipman affair until some future meeting. Both Shipman and Rogers continued to attend subsequent meetings. No further action on the matter was ever taken, and Rogers resigned his membership in the Society on March 19, 1880.

Summer, 1879

The third quarter of 1879 saw three new members added to the rolls: the controversial plumber, a manufacturer, and a railroad superintendent.

Thomas Ramsden (July 25, 1879)

The outstanding matter of the membership of Thomas Ramsden was finally resolved at the July 25th meeting, four months after the plumber was first proposed for membership. Secretary Rode read a letter from Ramsden regarding his membership application. Robert Book was appointed teller, and a vote was taken. The vote was eight to two in favor of admission. Members Morgan, Maynard, Kelley, Book, Gies, Glockner, McKnight, Shipman, White, and Rode were in attendance.

(Since Shipman and Gies were the only members of the committee which recommended against Mr. Ramsden, it is likely that these two gentlemen represented the dissenting votes. Of course, we will probably never know for sure). Shipman, Ramsden, and Gies were all present at the following meeting on August 1st.

Henry A. Breed (August 22, 1879)

Henry A. Breed was listed in the the 1878 Pittsburgh City Directory as the president and treasurer of the Culmer Spring Company at 26th and Liberty. He made his home at Fifth Avenue and Neville Streets, in Oakland. By 1890 he had become a real estate and insurance agent at 516 Market Street. He still resided at the same address.

Jesse Hildebrand (August 29, 1879)

In 1860 Jesse Hildebrand worked as a paper carrier, living at the corner of Hamilton and Sedgwick in Allegheny. At the same address lived Solomon Hildebrand, a mill wright (apparently

Jesse's father). By 1878 Jesse had become a superintendant at the "P & A Pass Ry" (?? Passenger Railway), living on Shady Avenue in Allegheny. He was still listed as a superintendant in 1890, living at 163 High Street in Allegheny.

The 1879 Exposition Ultimatum

At the June 6, 1879 meeting a new committee, consisting of members Kelley, Book, Kirk, and Morgan was appointed to begin the process of applying for exhibit space at the 1879 Pittsburgh Exposition. The committee reported progress at future meetings, but no details were recorded in the minutes.

On July 6th the committee reported that exhibit space could be reserved for \$5.00, and that the Exposition Society would provide six entrance tickets for Society members. At the following meeting the committee was instructed to apply for the exhibit space, but only if all Society members were provided with "a season ticket for the exposition." On July 11th the committee reported that the best offer they could get from the Exposition Society was for eight tickets. The other eight Society members would have to purchase their tiuckets. The Society stuck to its guns; Mr. Maynard was instructed to tell the Exposition Society that nothing less than tickets for all members would be acceptable. On July 25th Maynard reported back that the Exposition Society had give in to the WPNS demand: all members would be given free tickets.

The 1879 Exposition Coin Exhibit

At the July 25, 1879 meeting a committee "to make arrangements to place a collection of coins on exhibition at the coming Exposition" was appointed. The committee included members Kelley, Book, Kirk, Morgan, Maynard, Rode, and Shipman. At the following meeting (August 1st) a resolution was passed assessing each member of the Society \$5.00 "to meet the expenses incurred in making the display at the Exposition - \$2.50 to be paid now, and the balance when required by the committee."

A letter written by R. W. Shipman on July 28th was published (belatedly) in the September 1879 issue of Mason's Coin Collector's Herald.

Dear Sirs: - The Western Pennsylvania Numismatic Society will make a numismatic display at the coming Pittsburgh Exposition valued at \$8,000, with one of more of our members in constant attendance. Our object is to foster and increase the interest in the science. The Society

will sell a medal size 22 (by Lovett,) commemorating the event. The entire collection will be catalogued in good style, and distributed to the extent of 2,000 copies to our patrons. A limited number of Coin dealer's advertisements will be recieved, to assist in covering expenses, at the following low rates: One page, \$8.00; half page, \$5.00; quarter page, \$3.00. Reaching as it will a large number of amature collectors who will never see a coin paper, its advantage as an advertising meduim will be apparent. Hoping you will favor us with an insertion of this letter, I remain, respectfully yours,

R. W. Shipman, Sec. Finance Committee,
79 Wilkins Street, Allegheny City, PA

(We call the attention of all Coin dealers to this grand opportunity for increasng their sales in the West. -- Editor).

On August 22nd Mr. Morgan was again "elected to take charge of the display at the Exposition," being paid \$1.00 per day. Morgan and Rogers were appointed a committee "to arrange the coins for the Exposition." It is not clear how the duties of the smaller committee of Morgan and Rogers differed from the duties of the larger July 25th committee. Perhaps the larger group contributed items from their collections for the exhibit, and Morgan and Rogers handled the actual setting up of the exhibit.

It is not known if the exhibit catalogue described by Shipman was ever produced. No copy has been found in the Society archives, nor has it been referenced by writers on numismatic literature. There is no explicit record of payment for printing costs during this period.

As they had done in 1878, the Society held a special meeting at the Exposition building on September 3rd, 1879. It was again decided to hold no regular meetings of the Society during the course of the Exposition. Present that night were members Morgan, Kirk, Maynard, Kelley, Book, Gies, Glockner, McKnight, Ramsden, Rogers, Sermin, and Rode.

The 1879 Exposition Medal

The 1879 version of the Exposition medal was recieved by the August 29th, 1879 meeting. It was resolved to send "one of our medals to each of the following:

U.S. Mint, Philadelphia
The American Numismatic and Archeaological Society, NY
The Numismatic and Antiquarian Society of Philadelphia
Vermont Numismatic Society
Boston Numismatic Society
S. K. Harzfeld, Esq, Philadelphia
American Journal of Numismatics, Boston

Coin Collector's Journal, Scott & Co., NY
Numisma, Ed Frosard, Irvington, NY
Coin Collector's Herald, Mason & Co., Philadelphia
Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette
Pittsburgh Evening Leader
Pittsburgh Evening Telegraph
The Allegheny Mail

Letters acknowledging the gift of the medals were sent by most of the recipients. The letters were read by Secretary Rode at the first meeting following the Exposition (October 17, 1879). J.W. Scott chose to pan the efforts of the Society in the November 1879 issue of his Coin Collector's Journal.

The Western Pennsylvania Numismatic Society have issued a white metal medal for the Pittsburgh Exposition, which is similar in many respects to that issued in 1878; on the obverse is a view of the Exposition building. The design is not what we should expect from the numismatically educated members of the Pittsburgh Society; as such an engraving is of an age long since past, the collector's of to-day see so many beautiful medals that an inferior work is but little treasured.

At the end of the Exposition the Society had 113 medals in white metal on hand. It is not known how many were produced. At the October 17th meeting the Society resolved to "order 25 Copper and 25 Brass medals, and a number of Silver medals equal in number to those members who subscribe for them" At the following meeting (October 24th) it was decided to purchase a silver medal for the Society cabinet. In all, 17 silver medals were made. The medals were recieved from Mr. Lovett by December 19th, and were sold at the following prices: \$1.00 for the silver medals, \$.25 for the copper and brass medals (for members admitted prior to October 1st, 1879), and \$.50 for members admitted thereafter. At the January 16, 1880 meetiong it was decided to sell the remaining 1879 white metal medals for \$.20 each.

The October 24th meeting was eventful in other respects. Three new members were added to the rolls, presumably having been recruited through the Pittsburgh Exposition. A committee consisting of Marnard, Morgan, and Kelly was appointed to frame a new Constitution. Also, a motion regarding the 1879 medals was passed which would later lead to further controversy:

On Motion, it was resolved, that the medals of 1879 in Silver, Copper, and Brass shall not be transfered to any person who is not a member of the Society.

Fall, 1879

The fall crop of new members included a publisher, a painter, a clerk, and a music agent.

B. B. Coursin (October 24, 1879)

Little is known of B. B. Coursin. He resided in McKeesport, and this probably accounts for his absence from the Pittsburgh City Directories. His collection was sold at auction by Ed Frossard on September 21, 1883. The collection consisted of Large Cents, Proofs, early silver, and Literature.

J. S. Murray (October 24, 1879)

While there are several "J. Murray" entries in the Pittsburgh City Directories, it is likely that the one who joined WPNS was John S. Murray, proprietor of the Legal Journal, who resided at 65 River Avenue in Allegheny. He published the Journal as late as 1890, when his office was listed at 409 Grant Street. The Pittsburgh Legal Journal is being published today from a Grant Street address, although it is not known if the two publications are connected.

C. W. Kirk (October 24, 1879)

Little is known about C.W. Kirk. He may be a family member of Frank Kirk, the painter. There is a Chas. Kirk listed as a painter in the 1878 City Directory, on Bedford Avenue. In 1890 C. W. Kirk is listed as a grocer at 259 Fifth Avenue. Kirk later became a charter member of the American Numismatic Association (member number 44).

J. C. Cotton (November 7, 1879)

J. C. Cotton is listed as a receiver at 49 Sedgwick in Allegheny. He apparently lived there with a large family. Residing at the same address were Emmett E. Cotton, an attorney, and C.M. and John W. Cotton, both laborers. By 1890 C.W. Cotton is listed as a superintendent at the "P. A. & M. Pass Ry" This may be the same company Jesse Hildebrand worked for in 1878.

W. L. Buettler (November 14, 1879)

William L. Buetler is listed in the 1878 Pittsburgh City Directory as a music agent at 241 Webset. His name is spelled with just one "t", although this may be a typo. There are no other W.L. Buettlers listed.

Benjamin T. Schmauk (January 16, 1880)

Nothing is known about Schmauk; he is not listed in the Pittsburgh City Directories reviewed so far.

The New Constitution

A special meeting to discuss the new constitution was held on November 17, 1879. The new constitution was largely the same as the original constitution, with some additions and minor changes. One new feature was contained in Article V: "the Society shall possess a Medal, and a Certificate of Membership." Explicit procedures for amending the Constitution and nominating new members were spelled out. In addition, Resident, Corresponding, and Honorary Membership classifications were established.

At the following meeting (November 21st) a new set of Bylaws was presented. The number of members required for a quorum was raised from five to seven. The initiation fee was raised from \$1.00 to \$5.00, and the dues were reduced to \$4.00 a year, payable quarterly, in advance). The previous Bylaws had called for the collection of \$.25 per week, which could amount to over \$10.00 in the course of a year. The new Bylaws also stated that "the names of the eight (8) founders of this Society, and of the Honorary members, (whether living or dead,) shall be published in every printed list of the members of this Society."

The new Constitution and Bylaws were adopted, and the Committee was discharged. At the following meeting (November 28th) it was decided that dues would commence under the new structure beginning on the 1st of January, 1880.

At the February 6th, 1880 meeting "it was resolved to have 150 copies of the Constitution printed and that 25 of these be bound in Muslin." The twelve-page pamphlet was titled Constitution and By-Laws of the Western Penna. Numismatic Society. It was printed by W.W. Lewis & Co., 48 Fifth Avenue (across the street from George Rode's office) at a total cost of \$10.50 (paid on March 5th, 1880).

The pamphlets were available by the February 27th, 1880 meeting, where it was resolved that each member be given two copies. The ANS Library has a copy of the pamphlet, inscribed "from Geo. W. Rode, Secy, May 21/80."

A copy of the pamphlet was also sent to J.W. Scott, who

printed in his July 1880 Coin Collector's Journal:

We acknowledge the receipt of a copy of the "Constitution and By-Laws of the Western Pennsylvania Numismatic Society," of Pittsburgh. From the list of resident members they appear to be more alive to the interest of their new society than are those of the more antiquated association of this city. By way of wishing them success, we would warn them never to permit a numismatic spider (or dealer) induce them to make their headquarters in his webbed parlors, or the unwary flies may rue it; vide Am. Num. and Arch. Soc. of N.Y.

The Library Rules

At the same meeting that the new Constitution was adopted (November 28, 1879), curator Kelley presented a set of rules pertaining to the borrowing of items from the Society Library and Cabinet. At the following meeting (December 5, 1879) the rules "were adopted and ordered to be printed." These printed rules were apparently then affixed to the inside covers of books and catalogues in the Society library.

I. Books &c., will be delivered at the regular meetings at 8 o'clock, P.M. (to members in alphabetical order.) If a member is not present when his name is called, the choice will be given to the next in order.

II. Members are entitled to Books &c., for one (1) week; a fine of ten cents per week will be charged if retained longer than that time.

III. Any member losing Books &c., will be charged the original price of the same, or will be required to replace the same, as the Society may direct.

The Membership Medal

At the December 14, 1879 meeting, "it was resolved that a committee of three (3) be appointed to prepare designs for a medal of membership. The chair named Mess. Rode, Kelley, and Gies." The committee reported progress at subsequent meetings, but no details were recorded in the minutes. The committee prepared a report presented at the February 6th, 1880 meeting. The report has not been found in the Society archives, but the committee was authorized to have the medals struck. At the following meeting (February 13th) it was decided to strike the medals only in silver.

1880: Tough Times

The year 1880 was largely uneventful. The meetings continued

weekly as scheduled, with relatively little Society business recorded in the minutes. In some sense, the Society had come of age: its Constitution adopted and printed, its Library and Cabinet under construction, two important exhibitions mounted, two official medals produced, and plans for a membership medal underway. It had survived its formative stage, and despite disagreements among members had managed to grow into a mature and respected numismatic Society of national stature.

Still, the disagreements had taken their toll, and perhaps the youthful enthusiasm of a new organization had given way to the comfort and weariness of middle age. 1880 and subsequent years were notable more for the absence of many of the activities and events that marked the Society's hectic first two years. Tellingly, the Society's planned Membership medal would never be struck.

The Society's changes began early in 1880, beginning with the need to find a new location to hold the meetings. On April 30, 1880 it was decided to hold the meetings at the Home Hotel, Duquesne Way (Mr. Kelley's place of business) until further notice. J.C. Cotton inquired about the use of his brother E.E. Cotton's office at 91 Diamond Street. On June 18th (in the absence of J.C. Cotton), Curator Kelley reported that E.E. Cotton's office could be rented for \$.50 a meeting. He also offered the use of rooms in his Hotel free of charge. "On Motion", the report was received and filed, and a vote of thanks tendered Mr. Kelley - the committee was then discharged.

On October 29th, George Rode resigned his position as Secretary "owing to want of time to properly attend the office." Owing to the want of a volunteer to fill the position, Rode continued taking the minutes as usual.

In addition to losing its original meeting place, the Society lost several members in 1880: Rogers, Murray, Comingo, Cotton, White, and founder F. J. Kirk all resigned at various times. The Society would not add a new Resident member for another five years. A quorum not being present, several meetings could not be held. In the face of declining attendance, the Society voted on November 19, 1880 to reduce the frequency of meetings to two per month. "Article I of the By-Laws was amended to read The regular meetings shall be held on the first and third Friday's of every month at 8 P.M."

First Corresponding Members

Facing a dearth of new resident members, the Society began filling its rolls with Corresponding members.

William Poillon (June 18, 1880)

William Poillon was a steadfast member of the American Numismatic and Archeological Society of New York. He and a small band of fellow numismatists had held the organization together through a period of low interest before 1873. Being named the Society's recording secretary in that year, Poillon kept the books in superlative shape. Poillon's coins were sold by Ed Frossard on December 12, 1883 and October 10, 1893, by Lyman Low on January 26, 1904, and by Thomas Elder on January 6, 1918.

W. E. Woodward (July 16, 1880)

William Elliot Woodward was an apothecary from Roxbury, MA, near Boston. He had moved to that city in 1848. He entered the coin trade in 1860, issuing 110 auction catalogs by 1890.

Thomas Cunningham (November 19, 1880)

Thomas Cunningham of Mohawk, NY, was a noted collector of Fractional Currency. He was a neighbor and personal friend of General Francis Ellis Spinner, Treasurer of the U.S. from 1861 to 1875. Matt Rothert called Spinner "the Father of United States Postage and Fractional Currency." Being a collector well positioned to obtain first-hand information on the series, Cunningham published the first comprehensive listing of Fractional Currency in an 1893 issue of the American Journal of Numismatics. Cunningham's collection included the unique original paste-up patterns created by Spinner as models for the first issue of postage currency in 1862. Cunningham's collection later passed into the famous Herman Crofoot collection.

G.P. Nichols (March 4, 1881)

Nothing is known about G.P. Nichols, other than his hometown of Springfield, Massachusetts.

1881

The year 1881 opening with the Society still in search of a new meeting location. On February 4th, "Mr. Wooddridge's offer to let the Society have his office for their meetings at \$5.00 per quarter year was accepted."

The Society lost more members during the year. Benjamin T. Schmauk sent in a letter of resignation, but this was not accepted since he owed back dues. Henry Breed resigned on June 17, 1881. At the same meeting it was decided to meet only on the first Friday of the month during July and August.

Seven members attended the July meeting, but only six appeared at the following four meetings. No quorum being reached, no business was conducted. Active members during this period were only Book, Gies, Kelley, McKnight, Morgan, Ramsden, Rode, and Shipman.

In September, President Morgan moved out of town. On October 21st, the By-Laws were further amended again, this time returning the frequency of meetings to weekly. Apparently the members hoped that this would invigorate interest in the Society, but it was not to be. A quorum could not be reached at the next five meetings. On November 11th, only Ramsden, Gies, and Rode appeared.

1882

On January 13th, 1882 the membership voted to reduce the initiation fee to \$3.00, over Mr. Ramsden's objection. Ramsden introduced a motion to repeal the reduction at the January 27th meeting, but was overruled.

On February 10th, the office of the President was declared vacant. Morgan had moved to Louisville, and had been suspended on January 6th for nonpayment of dues. At an election on February 24th, Thomas Ramsden was elected President.

Morgan's Expulsion

At the April 7th, 1881 meeting (Ramsden, Gies, Book, Shipman, and Rode present) the Society severed its ties with founder Morgan completely:

Resolved that Mr. S. H. Morgan, (ex president) be expelled for non-payment of dues, and that a vote of censure be passed for gross breach of faith to this society in offering for sale, at public auction, the Society's Medals of 1879 in Silver, Copper, and Brass which were issued with the express condition that they should never be transferred to any person who is not a member of this Society.

Resolved, that the various numismatic journals be requested to publish this part of the minutes of the meeting.

Morgan had been present on October 24, 1879 when the resolution regarding the medals was passed, so he was certainly aware of the odd restriction.

On April 28th Ramsden appointed a committee of three (Book,

Gies, and McKnight) to carry out the resolution. On May 19th the committee reported that they had sent copies of the Society's resolution to the American Journal of Numismatics, Numisma, and the Coin Collector's Journal.

As of the September 1, 1882 meeting, none of the publications contacted had published the resolution. Secretary Rode was instructed to write to the editors to find out why nothing had appeared. Correspondence from three of the publications was read at the October 6th meeting, but has not been located in the Society archives.

Further Decline

On May 19th, 1882, the Membership Medal committee was officially dissolved. "This committee reported that at the time of appointment they could not agree upon a design that was satisfactory to all the members, and that since that time, they did not deem it advisable to prepare designs and have the dies cut owing to the decreasing membership in the Society."

On June 16th, 1882 the Society officially expelled six members who had been suspended for some time due to nonpayment of dues: Buettler, Haslett, C.W. Kirk, Murphy, Schmauk, and Sermin.

Murphy sent a letter (read at the June 30, 1882 meeting) declining to resume his membership, and offered his coin collection for sale. "The Secretary was instructed to thank Mr. Murphy for his offer to sell his collection to the Society, and inform him that we do not desire to purchase them at this time."

On October 1, 1882, the resignation of founder George Clapp was accepted. Out of the eighteen scheduled meetings held between September 1 and December 29, 1882, only five had a quorum. On two occasions, only one member besides President Ramsden showed up. On December 29th, the members voted another change to the Bylaws: the meeting would be held just once a month, on the first Friday at 8 P.M. The Society attempted to hold weekly meetings for the first part of 1883, but with little success. On May 11th the Society voted to put the new meeting schedule into effect as of July 1, 1883, with the meetings to be held at the residence of a member.

Meetings were held in August, September, and December 1883. It was not until June 7th, 1884 that the Society would again have a quorum. At that meeting members Maynard, Book, Shipman, and Glockner were expelled for nonpayment of dues (however, Book would be renominated and re-elected as a member on September 5th). The By-Laws were once again amended, reducing a quorum to three members.

New Recruits

On July 3, 1885, the Society's first new members in five years were proposed. Ferdinand Sermin recommended Charles Shinkle and H.E. Wilson for Resident membership, while George Rode proposed Lyman H. Low for Corresponding membership. With McKnight and Gies acting as tellers, the three were unanimously elected to membership at the following meeting.

Charles H. Shinkle (August 7, 1885)

In 1878 Charles H. Shinkle was a bookkeeper at Wilcox, Shinkle & Miller, "founders and machinists, grist and saw mill machinery a specialty." The company was located at 39 Water Street in Pittsburgh. Shinkle's partners were John F. Wilcox and William J. Miller, Jr. He made his home at 129 River Avenue in Allegheny. By 1890 Shinkle had gone into a partnership with Edwin A. Myers, forming Myers, Shinkle & Company at 523 Wood Street. By this time Shinkle made his home at Forbes and Craig Streets, in Oakland.

By 1905 Shinkle was president of "The Myers & Shinkle Co., Commercial Stationers, Printers & Binders," at 711 Liberty Street. In that year he combined his business and hobby interests when he first published his booklet "U.S. Coin Values and Lists." The card-covered volume was a forerunner of today's "Redbook", listing values for all regular issue U.S. coins in neat tabular format. The "lists" referred to in the title included "Years in which the coinage was small," "Prices some of the rarities have brought in recent years," "The gold mint marks," and "List of private gold issues." The latter was illustrated by 38 photos "taken from specimens in Cabinet of John A. Beck, Esq., Pittsburgh, PA," produced by Philadelphia dealer Henry Chapman. The inside back cover held a list of the names and addresses of coin dealers from across the nation.

In 1913 Shinkle ran unopposed for the office of 2nd Vice President of the A.N.A., serving under President Frank Duffield.

H.E. Wilson (August 7, 1885)

Nothing is known of H.E. Wilson, not even his full name. There are four H. Wilsons listed in the 1878 Pittsburgh City Directory, and many more in the 1890 directory.

Lyman H. Low (August 7, 1885)

Born in Boston in 1844, Lyman Haines Low served in the Civil War, sold dry goods for many years thereafter, and in 1883,

entered the coin business, issuing his first fixed price list from New York City. When he joined WPNS he was still early in his career as a coin dealer. He wrote a standard text on Hard Times Tokens in 1886, and served as co-editor of The American Journal of Numismatics from 1891 to 1907. Ultimately Low would issue 212 price lists and auction sales, the last shortly before his death in 1924.

Monthly Coin Sales Plan

At the same meeting, flush with their success in finally adding some new members, the Society appointed a committee of three (Rode, McKnight, and Shinkle) was appointed "to report on the advisability of having a series of monthly coin sales."

On October 2nd the committee reported favorably, and further proposed a set of rules for such sales. The Society would earn a commission of 10% on coins selling under \$5.00, and 5% for coins selling for \$5.00 or more. The funds would be used to purchase coins for the Society Cabinet. At the following meeting (November 6th) Henry McKnight was elected the first "Clerk for the Coin Sales." No sales are ever recorded as being held. The office of Clerk of Coin sales was expressly left vacant after the June 3, 1887 election of officers.

1886

G. W. Scott (May 7, 1886)

On April 2nd Henry McKnight proposed G. W. Scott for membership. At the following meeting (May 7th) Scott was unanimously elected. By October 1st however, Scott "not having filed his acceptance of Resident Membership his election was declared void." There is a George W. Scott listed as an engineer at 2610 Caray Avenue in the 1878 Pittsburgh City Directory. The Society later had a change of heart and rescinded its earlier voiding of his election, giving Scott another chance to sign up. By the end of the year, he had paid his initiation fee. But on May 4, 1888, his election was declared void again, Scott never having sent a letter of acceptance or attended a meeting.

A Close Brush with Death

The Society came close to closing its doors in 1886. At the October 1st meeting "it was resolved to hold a special meeting on Friday, October 15th to decide upon the question of continuing or dissolving the Society." The meeting was held at The Monongehela House. Eight members were present: Ramsden, Kelley, Shinkle, Sermin, McKnight, Gies, Book, and Rode.

After the subject had been fully discussed it was moved that we continue the Society. A vote being taken, it resulted - Yeas 3, Nays 3 - being a tie vote the President voted nay and declared the motion lost. The President then announced that it required the consent of all members to disband the Society and as the above showed this had not been obtained the Society would be continued as heretofore.

The Curator reported at the next meeting (November 5th) that the Society's Library consisted of "15 bound volumes, 292 catalogues, and 150 unbound periodicals. The Cabinet contains 111 medals & coins, 3 dies for medals, and 17-1878 + 111-1879 Society's medals."

On display at that meeting was the Society's 1886 Proof set. In December, George Rode displayed an example of Nicholas Veeder's proposed "co-metallic currency."

The Recruitment Circular

In a sign of new vigor, the Society voted to renew its subscription to the American Journal of Numismatics. In addition, a committee of four (McKnight, Book, Rode, and Shinkle) was appointed "to issue a circular inviting all collectors to join our Society." At the December meeting the committee reported that the circulars had been printed, but were not yet mailed. By February, 1887 they had all been mailed. By March, two replies were recieved, from W. B. Evans and Thomas Harper.

W. B. Evans

Nothing is known of W. B. Evans.

Thomas Harper

Harper was present as a guest at the March 3, 1887 meeting, where he read an article on "Primitive and Prehistoric Money in America." This is the first recorded prepared presentation ever at a WPNS meeting.

1887 & 1888: Further Slide

1887 was not to be a good year, however. Evans and Harper were never admitted to membership. Book, Kelley, and Shinkle were suspended for non-payment of dues. Finally, at the January 1888 meeting, Book and Shinkle were expelled.

In February 1888, and again in April, Ramsden and Rode were

the only members to show up for the meeting (although in April, Henry McKnight arrived late).

On March 2, 1888, J.E.H. Kelley was notified "to replace the catalogues &c. charged against him, as required by the rules relating to the Library. It was resolved to have 1000 copies of the Library rules printed." At the May 4th meeting a letter from Kelley regarding the catalogues was read, and "it was resolved that Mr. Kelley be given til next meeting to replace them."

At the June meeting, Curator McKnight reported that he had notified Kelley about the catalogues, but had recieved no reply. It was then resolved "that Mr. J.E.H. Kelley be suspended till the next regular meeting, and if nothing is heard from him by that time, the Curator is hereby directed to bring charges against him with a view to his expulsion from the Society." In July a letter from Kelley was read, requesting the Society to purchase replacements for the missing catalogs and to send him the bill. In April, 1888 Kelley was sent a bill for \$2.67.

Library Additions

In August, 1888 the Society authorized the purchase of a lot of 453 priced catalogues from Charles Steigerwalt. However, the lot was previously sold. In September a copy of Attinelli's "Numisgraphics" was purchased for \$1.25. The Library Committee was authorized to bid on a number of books offered in Woodward's 101st sale. On December 7, 1888 the Society ordered a plated copy of the Robert Coulton Davis collection, and purchased a copy of Snowden's "Mint Manual" for \$2.00.

Final Curtain

By June 7, 1889 however, the membership had decided that it was again time to consider the question of continuing the Society. At the time there were only six active members. After re-electing the current slate of officers, the Society resolved "that a vote on the question of continuing or dissolving the Society be taken at our next meeting, and that the Secretary notify each member of this resolution. At the following meeting (July 5th) it was resolved "that the Society proceed to dispose of its property with a view to dissolving." A committee of Rode, McKnight, and Gies was appointed to catalog the property of the Society for an auction to be held among its remaining members.

In August the committee reported that it had cataloged the Library, and recommended dividing the remaining 1878 and 1879 medals equally among the members, with any extra pieces to be

placed in the sale.

Meanwhile, Kelley's check for \$2.67 had been recieved, but there were still two catalogues missing and charged to him. The Society sent Kelley a second bill, resolving on September 6th to expell him if the second bill were not paid. Kelley's check had arrived by the October meeting, and the expulsion motion was set aside.

The final arrangements for the dissolution of the Society were made at the October 4, 1889 meeting. Present were the six active members, Ramsden, Sermin, McKnight, Wilson, Gies, and Rode.

On motion, it was resolved that the Society's property be sold, at auction among the members, on Thursday evening, October 24th at 7 o'clock P.M. and following evenings until all disposed of, at the office of the Curator; sale to be adjourned if any member, through sickness or absence from the City, is unable to be present.

The group assembled at the appointed hour at Curator McKnight's office. Although Mr. Wilson was not present, the sale went ahead as scheduled.

Mr. McKnight was elected as Auctioneer, and Mr. Rode as Clerk. The sale then took place as per the Catalogue, 324 lots being disposed of, when, owing to the lateness of the hour, it was agreed to adjourn the sale until Friday, Nov. 1st at 7 o'clock.

The group reconvened as scheduled, with all six members present. The remainder of the property was auctioned. The entire 481-lot sale realized a total of \$184.06 for the Society. At 8 P.M. that evening, the group held an official Society meeting. They decided that the remaining copies of the 1880 Constitution and By-Laws be divided among the remaining members, and that each member be allocated a credit toward their auction bill equal to their portion of the assets of the Society. Mr. Ramsden then offered to host the next meeting at his residence.

On December 6, 1889, the members gathered at the home of President Ramsden. All were present except Mr. White. It was to be the Society's last meeting for twenty years. After resolving amounts owed to the Curator and Secretary for postage and other expenses, the Society's books were then audited. \$41.47 was distributed to each of the remaining members.

Secretary Rode's last entry in the minute book reads as follows:

The foregoing minutes having been read and approved, a vote of thanks was tendered Mr. Ramsden for his courtesy in exhibiting his magnificent collection of Coins and Medals. The consent of all the members having been obtained, a motion was made to now dissolve the Society which was carried unanimously.

The Western Pennsylvania Numismatic Society was temporarily gone, but was never forgotten. In a letter written to the Society in 1939, Thomas W. Voetter stated:

Personally, I have often regretted that I did not identify myself with your organization when I was living in Pittsburgh. It seems that its existence was not brought to my attention. I was just a beginner in collecting and did not then know of the advantages of membership and did not have the initiative to find out about it for myself.

Some of my most pleasant memories, in the numismatic way, are of some of the older members and founders of your society. It was Mr. John Rivett who first opened my eyes to the possibility of obtaining coins other than from circulation or accident, and Mr. Rode was so enthusiastic and imparted his enthusiasm about collecting in such a manner that it was very helpful to me. I also met Mr. Ramsden and obtained a few specimens from him which I still have. At the 1892 Convention I also met others of your early members. Mr. Gies was also another who kept my interest in coins alive. A short time ago I ran across a minor proof set which he furnished me ever so many years ago.

OFFICERS

DATE	PRES	VP	SEC	TREAS	CURATOR	CLERK
6/14/1878	Morgan	Kirk, F.J.	Rode	Maynard	-	
6/28/1878	Morgan	Kirk, F.J.	Rode	Maynard	-	
4/11/1879					Clapp	
6/20/1879	Morgan	Kirk, F.J.	Rode	Maynard	Comingo	
8/13/1880					Kelley	
6/17/1881	Morgan	Kelley	Rode	Book	Gies	
7/01/1881				Ramsden	Gies	
6/30/1882	Ramsden	Kelley	Rode	McKnight	Gies	
3/02/1883			McKnight			
6/29/1883	Ramsden	McKnight	McKnight	Sermin	Gies	
6/07/1884	Ramsden	Kelley	Rode	Sermin	Gies	
6/05/1885	Ramsden	Kelley	Rode	Sermin	Gies	
6/04/1886	Ramsden	Kelley	Shinkle	Sermin	McKnight	Rode
6/03/1887	Ramsden	Kelley	Rode	Sermin	McKnight	
6/01/1888	Ramsden	Gies	Rode	Sermin	McKnight	
6/07/1889	Ramsden	Gies	Rode	Sermin	McKnight	

MEMBERSHIP

1. 6/14/1878 Clapp, George H.
2. 6/14/1878 Rode, George W.
3. 6/14/1878 Shipman, R.W.
4. 6/14/1878 Rivett, John
5. 6/14/1878 Kirk, Frank J.
6. 6/14/1878 Morgan, S.H.
7. 6/14/1878 Maynard, Elbert F.
8. 6/14/1878 McKnight, Henry
9. 12/27/1878 Comingo, E.G.
10. 1/10/1879 Sermin, Ferdinand
11. 1/17/1879 Haslett, W.R.
12. 1/17/1989 Kelley, J.E.H.
13. 1/31/1879 Murphy, Sidney F.
14. 1/31/1879 Gies, A. Charles
15. 4/18/1879 Glockner, A., Jr.
16. 5/02/1879 Rogers, A.J.
17. 5/16/1879 Book, Robert D.
18. 6/13/1879 White, David J.
19. 7/25/1879 Ramsden, Thomas
20. 8/22/1879 Breed, Henry A.
21. 8/29/1879 Hildebrand, Jesse
22. 10/24/1879 Coursin, B.B.
23. 10/24/1879 Murray, J. S.
24. 10/24/1879 Kirk, Charles W.
25. 11/07/1879 Cotton, J.C.
26. 11/14/1879 Buettler, W.L.
27. 1/16/1880 Schmauk, Benjamin T.
28. 6/18/1880 Poillon, William (c - New York)
29. 7/16/1880 Woodward, W. E. (c - Roxbury, MA)
30. 11/19/1880 Cunningham, Thomas (c - Mohawk, NY)
31. 3/04/1881 Nichols, G.P. (c - Springfield, MA)
32. 8/07/1885 Shinkle, Charles H.

33.	8/07/1885	Wilson, H.E.	
34.	8/07/1885	Scott, G.W.	(later voided)
35.	8/07/1885	Low, Lyman H.	(c - New York, NY)

MEMBER	BORN	ELECTED	LEFT	DIED
Book		5/16/1879	n 1/06/1888	
Breed		8/22/1879	r 6/07/1881	
Buettler		1879	n 6/30/1882	
Clapp		6/14/1878	r10/06/1882	
Comingo		12/27/1878	r 1880	
Cotton		11/07/1879	r 1880	
Coursin		10/24/1879	e 1/05/1883	
c Cunningham		11/19/1880		
Gies		1/31/1879		
Glockner		4/18/1879	n 6/07/1884	
Haslett		1/17/1879	n 6/30/1882	
Hildebrand		8/29/1879	r 4/07/1882	
Kelley		1/17/1879		
Kirk, C.W.		10/24/1879	n 6/30/1882	
Kirk, F.W.		6/14/1878	r12/17/1880	
Maynard		6/14/1878	n 6/07/1884	
McKnight		6/14/1878		
Morgan		6/14/1878	e 4/07/1882	
Murphy		1/31/1879	n 6/30/1882	
Murray			r 1/25/1880	
c Nichols		3/04/1881		
Ramsden		7/25/1879		
Rivett		6/14/1878		
Rode		6/14/1878		
Rogers		5/02/1879	r 3/19/1880	
Sermin		1/10/1879		
Schmauk		1880	n 6/30/1882	
Scott		5/07/1886		
Sermin				
Shinkle		8/07/1885	n 1/06/1888	
Shipman		6/14/1878	n 6/07/1884	
White		6/13/1879	r 1/19/1880	

Wilson

8/07/1885

r = resigned
n = expelled for nonpayment of dues
e = expelled for other reasons
v = membership voided

AUCTIONS

DATE	CATALOGER	LOTS	PAGES	WITH COMP.	PRICED CATALOGS
01/28/1879	R. W. Shipman	359	12		
This is Shipman's only sale. An unpriced copy of this catalog was offered in the Kirk sale (Morgan, 6/27/1878, lot 17) where it brought 40 cents.					
3/11/1879	S. H. Morgan	375	13		
This is Morgan's first sale.					
4/30/1879	J. Adler	225	8		
This is Adler's only sale. Scarce catalog, according to Morgan. The ANS library has a copy. A copy pedigreed to the WPNS library is held by Mr. Armand Champa of Louisville, KY.					
* 6/27/1879	S. H. Morgan	221	8		Rode
The F. J. Kirk collection. Salmon covers. Scarce catalog, according to Morgan. Kirk was a founding member of WPNS, who would resign on 12/17/1880.					
* 10/16/1879	S. H. Morgan	303	11	Rogers	Rogers
Grey covers.					
* 12/04/1879	S. H. Morgan	393	14	Rode	Rode
Scarce catalog, according to Morgan.					

Light green covers.

* 12/23/1879 S. H. Morgan 225 8 Rogers
Salmon covers.
Scarce catalog, according to Morgan.

* 1/28/1880 John Haseltine 600 18 (Sampson)
The S. H. Morgan collection.
Offered priced copies of the
following catalogs:
3/11/1879 Morgan (lot 579 \$.10)
4/30/1879 Adler (lot 583 \$.13)
6/27/1879 Morgan (lot 591 \$.25)
10/16/1879 Morgan (lot 597 \$.45)
12/04/1879 Morgan (lot 600 \$.16)

1/29/1880 S. H. Morgan 227 7
Rare catalog, according to Morgan.
Only 125 copies printed.

* 5/27/1880 S. H. Morgan 359 13 Rode
Copies exist in both Blue and Grey
covers.

7/29/1880 S. H. Morgan 277 8
The C. W. Kirk collection

* 9/23/1880 S. H. Morgan 322 12 Rode Rode
Grey covers.

12/07/1880 S. H. Morgan 280 8

1/17/1881 S. H. Morgan 529 17
The Robert. W. Mercer collection

3/30/1881 S. H. Morgan 699 21
The J. H. Keeler collection.

NOTE: Steigerwalt's Ninth sale on
November 7th, 1882 included items
property of Rev. J. H. Keeler, of
Litchfield, MI.

7/27/1881 S. H. Morgan 265 8
This is Morgan's 13th, and last sale.
On 4/7/1882 Morgan was expelled from
WPNS for selling a WPNS medal to a
non-member via one of his sales.
At the same meeting, Jesse Hildebrand
resigned his membership.

* 4/19/1882 W. E. Woodward 1900 76

The collection of S. H. Morgan,
now living in Louisville, KY.
Conjecture: Morgan retired to
Louisville, putting his personal
collection and library up for sale.

Lot 1697 is a copy of Woodward's
sale of the Mickley collection,
Oct 28, Nov 2, 1867. "pierced for
binding and somewhat soiled, but
extremely rare".

Lot 1747 is a group of 88 of S. H.
Morgan's own sales. "Catalogues of the
various Pittsburgh sales, some priced.
Of these catalogues some very small
editions were printed, and most of them
are really rare. The entire stock
remaining, 88 pieces."

MEMBER PUBLICATIONS

- * Clapp, George H., The United States Cents of the Years 1798-1799, Sewickley, PA, 1931

This is a very rare work, and much sought after by
bibliophiles and collectors of Early American Copper.

Low, Lyman H., Hard Times Tokens, Boston, 1886, 91pp

Shinkle, Charles H., U.S. Coin Values and Lists, Pittsburgh,
PA., 1905

- * -same-, 1909, 20pp, tan cover (from Money Tree #12, lot 848)
- * -same-, 1910, 23pp, green cover (from Kolbe #48, lot 643)

COINS OF THE CARNEGIE

COLONIAL COINAGE

presented to the
WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA NUMISMATIC SOCIETY

April 7, 1992

by Gerald S. Porter



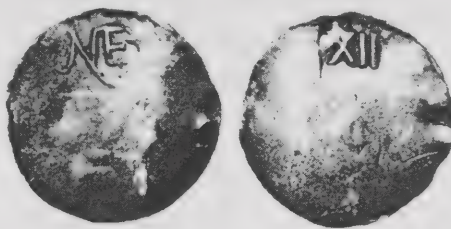
Rare 1694 Carolina Elephant Token

COLONIAL COINAGE

The early settlers in America were hard-pressed for coinage and had to rely on the coins brought with them from their land of origin or acquired through trade. The coinage of money at the time was a royal prerogative and forbidden to the colonists. To make matters worse the British imposed taxes and inflated prices on goods shipped to the colonies while at the same time refusing to pay with specie for colonial goods. It is little wonder under these conditions that 'private' issues began to emerge.

New England Coinage, (1652)

In the Massachusetts Bay Colony the few coins available were British royal farthing tokens, badly worn, corroded and no longer in use in Britain. After the death of Charles I, (1648) there was no king on the throne of England and with relaxation of restrictions the first true colonial American coinage appeared. This was the New England Shilling, Six Pence and Three Pence of 1652. These were crude, lightweight silver pieces with NE on one side and III, VI, or XII on the other. These are very rare with only two-three pence and seven-six pence known. Our example is the 1652 Shilling illustrated below.



Tree Coinage (1653-82)

Subsequently, design changes were implemented due to the ease of clipping and counterfeiting of the NE pieces. The first of these was the Willow Tree Coinage (1653-60), not represented here. Next was the Oak Tree Coinage (1660-67) and the Pine Tree Coinage (1667-82). Most all of these coinages bore the date 1652 to give the appearance of having been struck during the English Civil War when Cromwell was in power. There are many varieties ranging from scarce to rare. Our examples are the Oak Tree Shilling and the Pine Tree Three and Six Pence.



1652 Pine Tree Shilling, Noe-2, Large Planchet

Lord Baltimore Coinage (1658-59)

In Maryland, in 1658, Lord Calvert, the second Lord Baltimore, had coins struck in London (uncertain mint), for use in the Maryland Colony. Denominations were Shilling, Six and Four Pence in silver and One Pence in copper. Lord Calvert had some difficulty getting this coinage out of England, but did so with the intervention of Charles II. The coins were put into circulation and vanished over time. Numerous die varieties and patterns exist in this series.(Breen).



COINAGES AUTHORIZED BY ROYAL PATENTAmerican Plantations Token (1688)

These tokens struck in nearly pure tin were the first authorized coinage for the British Colonies in America. They were made under a franchise granted in 1688 to John Holt. Restrikes were made about 1828 using original dies. Denomination is 1/24 Part Real. High grade examples are extremely rare due to tinpest or crumbling of the metal at low temperature.



Rosa Americana Penny (1723)

William Wood, an Englishman, obtained a patent from George I to make tokens for Ireland and the American Colonies. His design for the colonies depicted a large rose centered on the reverse with the wording Rosa Americana Utile Dulci (American Rose-Useful and Pleasant). Denominations were Half, One and Two Pennies. Early examples are undated, later pieces show dates 1722, 23, 24 and 33. These coins were not readily accepted in the colonies as they were of odd weights and sizes. They range from scarce to exceedingly rare.



1773

Virginia Coinage (1733)

In 1733 a copper half pence was authorized by the crown for Virginia. It is the sole copper coinage issued under royal authority for the only colony having the legal right to such coinage; the only issue whose circulation was actually interrupted by the revolution; and the only one of which the average collector can still obtain an uncirculated specimen. (Breen). There are two varieties; dot and no dot after GEORGIVS. There is also a larger proof pattern, referred to as a penny and a silver piece dated 1774 called a shilling (possibly a pattern).



OTHER EARLY AMERICAN TOKENS

The Elephant Tokens (1664?, 1694)

The London elephant tokens were probably made in England about 1666 and were used in the American colonies and possibly in Africa. The legend, LONDON GOD PRESERVE refers to the great plague in London during the reign of Charles II. Breen lists 14 types for this piece. See illustration below.

The Carolina (see frontpiece) and New England tokens are dated 1694 and again were probably struck in England for use as tokens or perhaps advertising to promote interest in the colonies. There are two varieties of the Carolina token; the first with the word 'proprietors' and the second with the corrected proprietors (o over e). The London tokens are scarce, Carolina rare and New England exceedingly rare



Higley or Granby Coppers (1737)

These pieces were made during 1737-39 by Dr. Samuel Higley of Granby, Conn. and later by his brother John. Dr. Higley owned a copper mine wherein he smelted his own ore and made the dies for his coinage. They were pure copper. The early dies bore the legend THE VALUE OF THREE PENCE and due to excess quantity of coins available and difficulty of acceptance, later changed to read VALUE ME AS YOU PLEASE. Survivors are of extreme rarity. There were eight obverse and five reverse dies according to Breen.



Edwards Copy

Machin Mills Coinage

Struck by Thomas Machin in Newburgh, N.Y., they are lightweight imitations of British Half Pence with George III obverse and Brittania reverse. They are distinguished by crude die work and a single outline in Brittania's shield. Dates used were 1747, 1771, 1772, 1774-76, 1778, 1787-88. Most of them are scarce.



British Half Pence

COINAGE OF THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESSContinental Currency (1776)

Based on sketches by Benjamin Franklin, the Continental Congress ordered these pieces struck as patterns for a potential Federal coinage. These were the only American coins to bear the date of the Declaration of Independence. Struck in silver, pewter and brass.



POST-CONFEDERATION ISSUESMaryland Coinage

Captain John Chalmers, a goldsmith from Annapolis, Md. struck a series of silver tokens in 1783. These were three pence, six pence and shilling and they were the first silver coins for circulation since the New England pieces over 100 years earlier. They were 'honest' weights and as such availed no profit; thus were probably used to advertise the family business, (Breen). Pieces displayed here are the three pence and one shilling.

Standish Barry Threepence (1790)

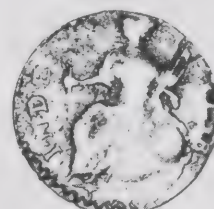
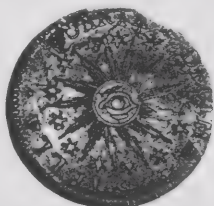
Colonel Standish Barry, a Baltimore silversmith struck this piece in silver possibly to advertise his new store in Baltimore. The obverse bust is probably Washington and the date July 4, '90 may have been to commemorate Independence Day. All known specimens show a degree of die failure; planchets are crude and mostly too narrow to accomodate the full design, (Breen). Most survivors are of low grade.

Vermont Copper, (1786)

Reuben Harmon Jr. of Rupert, Vt. was given permission to coin copper pieces by the Vermont legislature for a period of two years beginning July 1, 1785 and later extended for eight years. The first issues carried a landscape design with plow on obverse; later examples carry the George III bust design. Most of these are struck on poor and defective planchets and some of the later issues were made by Machin's Mills coiners Near Newburgh, N.Y.



Landscape Type



Bust Type

Nova Eborac Copper, (1787)

John Bailey struck large quantities of coppers in New York city and Elizabethtown, N.J. in defiance of the New York legislature who was against private coinages. These pieces depicted a male bust on obverse with wording NOVA EBORAC, (New York), and Brittania on the reverse. Four types are listed and all are rare.



1783

Nova Constellatio Copper, (1787)

This patriotic design hails the Federal Republic as a 'New Constellation'. It was struck supposedly by Gouverneur Morris, Asst. Supt. of Finance for the Confederation, in fairly large quantities by the Birmingham mint in England from dies made by George Wyon III and imported for American circulation. Breen lists 11 types dated from 1783-86. (above date not listed in Breen or Red Book).

TOKEN ISSUESWashington Success Token, (No Date)

This piece was probably made to celebrate Washington's second inaugural, (Mar. 1793) and made during the period 1792-95, (15 stars for 15 states). Origin is unknown but it was probably made in the United States. There are two sizes with the larger generally much worn and the smaller in choice condition. Our example is the smaller type. Breen lists 12 varieties.



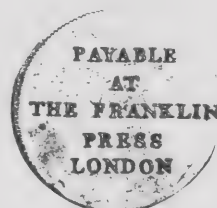
Mott Token, (1789)

One of the first tradesman's tokens issued in America manufactured in England. It was issued by William and John Mott of New York city. One side depicts a grandfather clock (Mott's symbol) and the other shows an eagle. Breen lists eight varieties; most examples are well worn with high grade examples being extremely rare.



Franklin Press Copper, (1794)

Another English tradesman's token associated with Benjamin Franklin, attributed to Watts Printing Works, London, where Franklin worked in 1726 and revisited in 1768. Breen lists four types with three being unique.



Bibliography:

Complete Encyclopedia of U.S. and Colonial Coins, Walter Breen, 1988, Doubleday.

A Guidebook of United States Coins, R.S. Yeoman, 1982, Western Publishing Co.

Auction Catalogs:

Bowers and Merena, Mar. 1992.

Early American Numismatics, Mail Bid Auction, Mar. 21, 1992

THE CREATION
OF THE
KOREAN WAR COMMEMORATIVE DOLLAR

Don Carlucci
July 6, 1992

The Creation of The Korean War Commemorative Dollar

The place was Fifth and Arch Streets in Philadelphia. The date was Monday, May 6, 1991. It was almost ten o'clock a.m. Mint and Treasury dignitaries were mixed with invited guests and representatives of the news media on the first floor of the United States Mint building. As the first strike ceremony was about to begin, I looked around the room at the people in attendance. On hand were many of the Mint engravers. In attendance was the United States Treasurer, Catalina Villalpando, and U.S. Mint Director, Donna Pope. The Superintendent of the Philadelphia Mint, John T. Martino, seemed to be scurrying from one group to the next, accommodating their needs and familiarizing them with his facility. Numismatic friends such as Frank Gasparro, Dominic Valentino, Harry Forman, American Numismatic Association President Kenneth L. Hallenbeck and a host of others were scattered throughout the audience. An important looking foreign dignitary, Myongbia Kim, Counselor of the Korean Embassy, was present. His official duties included representing the government of South Korean President Roh Tae Woo.

An impressive looking American General stood stoically erect in military fashion, adorned with four brass stars on each shoulder and a host of military decorations pinned to his chest. General Richard G. Stilwell, one-time commander of U.S. Forces Korea and present chairman of the Korean War Veterans Memorial Advisory Board, was preparing himself to dispatch another official duty.

However, the real dignitaries of the day were the countless veterans who came to pay homage to the metallic creation of John Mercanti and T. James Ferrell. Sixteen veterans organizations in all were represented. They came in full military garb adorned with military ribbons and battle citations. Some walked, some used crutches, and others came in wheel chairs. They were both a living tribute and symbol of American courage that nearly forty years before had fought desperately to retain

a foot hold in South Korea against massive attacks from North Korean and Communist Chinese troops.

This courage and determination against overwhelming odds led to the eventual cease-fire of July 27, 1953. North Korea would be Communist controlled but the south would remain free with a demarcation line drawn on the thirty-eighth parallel.

Later in the program General Stilwell was to note that this eventual standoff, this cease-fire, was a pivotal event in post-World War II history.

As the ceremonies began these veterans seemed both proud and attentive to a program that would finally pay homage and respect to the deeds that they had accomplished many years before. National Commanders of the American Legion, AMVETS, Catholic War Veterans, Disabled American Veterans, Eastern Paralyzed Veterans Association, EX-POW, Grim Reapers, Jewish War Veterans, Korean War Veterans Association, Korean EX-POW, Military Order of the Purple Heart, Paralyzed Veterans of America, RAKKASANS, Rangers, Retired Army Nurses, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars would all have a chance to strike a coin during the ceremony.

The main speaker on the podium was General Richard G. Stilwell. "Critics, take notice," Stilwell said, "We veterans think this is a magnificent coin. We commend the engravers." Stilwell's remarks were directed at a hostile numismatic press and a Fine Arts Commission that seems to never like any of the modern commemorative coin designs created by the present Mint engravers. He continued by stating that Mercanti's and Ferrell's creation "represents the Korean War in microcosm and is the veteran's personal memorial and a treasured keepsake."

General Stilwell delivered his address after Donna Pope, Catalina Villapando, and Myongabia Kim had offered comments on the sacrifices soldiers made during the Korean conflict.

Following Stilwell's address, the numismatic press was ushered downstairs to the Philadelphia Mint "Gold Room". The "Gold Room" is where gold bullion is stored and gold coins usually struck.

Because of security reasons, representatives of more than a dozen veterans groups, plus members of the numismatic community and other invited guest could only watch the striking of the Proof 1991-P Korean War Memorial silver dollar via close-circuit television.

We attentively watched on the television screens as a beaming General Stilwell struck the first Korean War silver dollar. Coins were then struck in rapid sequence by Myongbia Kim, Catalina Vasquez Villapando, Donna Pipe, Commanders of 16 veterans' organizations, South Korean Mayor General Kwang Duk Han, and American Numismatic Association President Kenneth Hallenbeck.

While the important dignitaries and members of the media made their way to the Gold Room for the actual first strikes, Mint Sculptor-Engravers John Mercanti and T. James Ferrell described their designs to those of us who were left assembled in the entrance to the Philadelphia Mint.

John Mercanti's obverse design of the Korean War silver dollar features an Army infantryman charging up a hill, with naval ships in the foreground and F-86 aircraft flying overhead. Eight five-pointed stars appear around the upper right border. Also featured are the inscriptions THIRTY EIGHTH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATIVE, KOREA, IN GOD WE TRUST, LIBERTY, and the dual dates, 1953-1991. Mercanti's initials, JM, appear in the lower right corner of the field.

Mercanti said he was faced with the obstacle of reducing something as imposing as the Korean conflict to one side of a coin. After looking at the possibilities of citing various military campaigns or depicting the insignias, Mercanti said he settled on reproducing designs emblematic of the three modes of attack - land, sea, and air - and incorporating both stylization and realism. Stylization was used for the ships and planes, realism for the foot soldier.

Mercanti said that although his design represented all those who served, it was specially dedicated to his cousin, Andrew, who was so severely wounded in ground fighting in Korea,

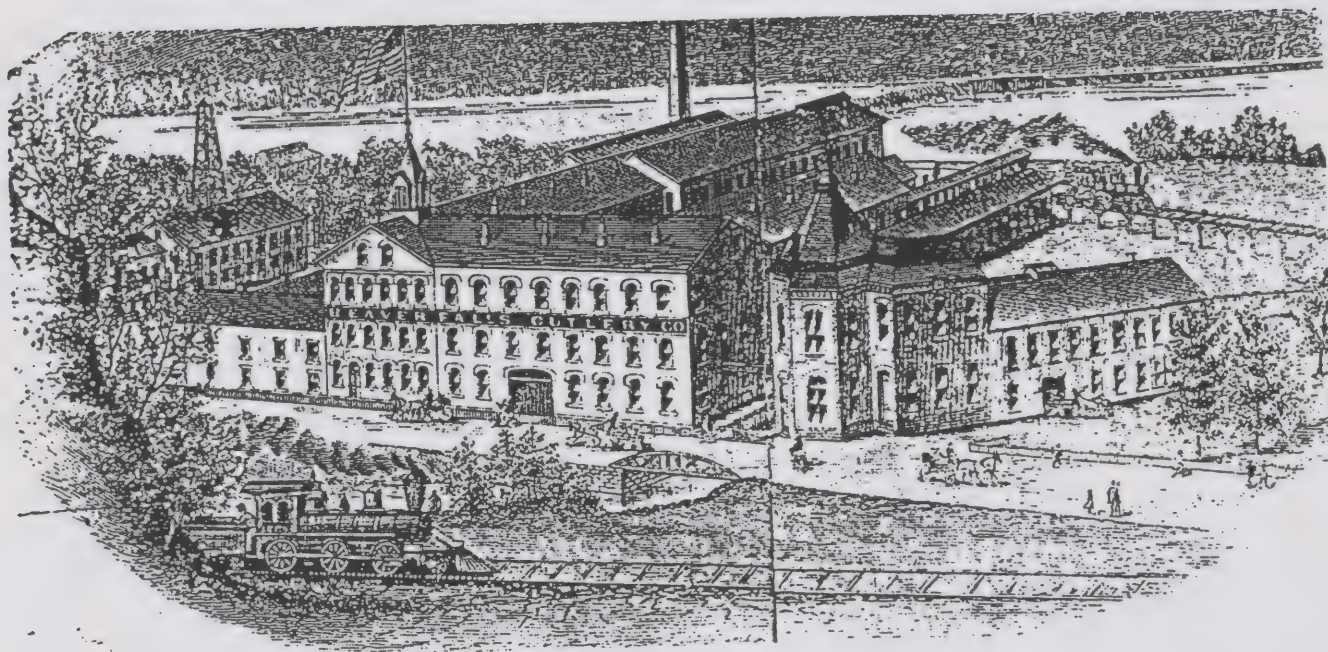
that he had to be strapped to the side of a tank and driven to a field hospital. Andrew was discharged from the army because of his wounds and his deteriorating physical condition. John Mercanti was to visit him many times at the Veterans hospital in Valley Forge. Young Andrew never recovered. As John Mercanti stood on the podium that day in May of 1991, his parting words to the audience were, "Andrew, this one is for you".

James Ferrell's original reverse design underwent significant modifications because of the recommendations of the Commission of Fine Arts. Ferrell's final design includes the images symbolic of the war. He felt it was important to show a map depicting a divided Korea, with diagonal lines defining the north from south. The horizontal line represents the 38th parallel where the North Koreans invaded the South. The Yin-Yang symbol is taken from the South Korean flag.

A head of a determined-looking eagle was selected to represent America's presence and commitment there, Ferrell said.

Mercanti's dedication and Ferrell's symbolic images were to leave a lasting impression with me. Although the coin had been criticized by the Commission of Fine Arts, and scorned by the numismatic press, I could not help but remember General Stilwell's stirring words, "We veterans think this is a magnificent coin. We commend the engravers".

The Beaver Falls Cutlery Company Merchant Token



Beaver Falls Cutlery Co. works about 1875.

presented to
The Western Pennsylvania Numismatic Society
September 1, 1992

by
Lawrence C. Korchnak

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The Beaver Falls Cutlery Company Merchant Token

The Beaver Falls Cutlery Company was established in 1867 in Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania. It prospered for a time, endured a major strike, and experimented with Chinese labor. The Cutlery Company appeared to leave no numismatic legacy until 1991 when its abbreviated name was discovered counterstamped on a seated liberty half dollar .

Photo: Cutlery Co.

The Beaver Falls Cutlery Company was first chartered to operate in Rochester, Pennsylvania, in 1866. The next year, it established its manufacturing plant in Beaver Falls in the lower end of town near the river. This location soon became known as the "cutlery property". In 1870 it became a capital stock company with the majority of shares owned by the Harmony Society. The Harmony Society was a religious

communal society that settled in Harmony, Pennsylvania, in 1804. Eleven years later, the Harmonists moved to New Harmony, Indiana, where the Society's records report that the hostility of their neighbors forced them to move back to Western Pennsylvania. They settled in Economy in 1824, a part of present-day Ambridge, Pennsylvania. By producing quality goods with the free labor of their members, the Harmonists often undersold their competitors, thus dominating the market. However, years of professed celibacy and their inability to attract new members resulted in a significant decline in their numbers. With fewer workers, they resorted to hiring outside labor. The business focus of the Society soon changed from manufacturing to capital investment, hence, their interest in the Beaver Falls Cutlery Company.

The Harmonists' notorious thrift made them effective and successful business people, but it ultimately proved to be the downfall of the Beaver Falls Cutlery Company. The Cutlery Company went through an intense labor dispute that culminated in a bitter strike in 1872. Rather than meet the workers' wage demands, 200 Chinese laborers from New Orleans were contracted to replace the strikers for a period of five years. This management decision reduced the monthly payroll from \$13,000 to \$5,000. Although favorable to the balance sheet, the move was met with great resistance by local townspeople. The peaceable and industrious Chinese lived

under constant fire from the local citizens. Ten Chinese workers died while employed by the Cutlery Company and a cemetery was created at the far end of town for what the townspeople referred as the "heathen Chinees." Legend has it that the bodies of the Chinese workers were exhumed and shipped back to China by some unknown benefactor. Research reveals no evidence to indicate that anyone had the interest in and the money to spend on such a project. However, it has been substantiated that their bones were removed from the ground and taken away in sacks. One theory suggests that they were "evicted" so that the property could be used for residential purposes.

The last of the Chinese workers left in 1877 when their contract expired. Their jobs were once again filled by local workers and the Cutlery Company operated for nine more years until it ceased to be profitable in 1886.

The Cutlery Company produced all kinds of knives and tableware. At its peak it employed 300 workers who turned out 120 dozen finished products per day. These products ranged from finely crafted bone-handled knives to an austere but sturdy wood-handled utensil. The former displayed a delicately etched logo "Beaver Falls Cutlery Company" in a scroll with flowered ornamentation on the blade while the latter had a plain 27mm stamp "Beaver Falls Cut. Co."

Photo: Utensils

Curiously, company records use the term "cutlery" to describe all of its products while you can see from the photo above that they obviously produced their share of forks as well.

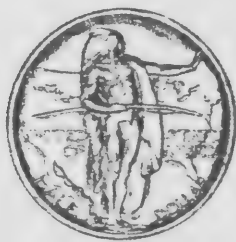
Photo: Coin, obv./rev.

The newly discovered merchant counterstamp appears on a holed 1875-S seated liberty half dollar. The counterstamp reads "Beaver Falls Cut. Co." and is 27mm long suggesting that the same or similar punching tool was used on the coin and on the blade of the wood-handled knife. The photos contained in this article do not afford the reader the opportunity to make a detailed comparison of the two, but the lettering and style are virtually identical.

A local historian and author of the history of the City of Beaver Falls recalled seeing one other similarly counterstamped coin thirty or so years ago. So far, no other specimen has surfaced. There appears to be no written record of counterstamping in the company records, just as there is no written reference to the production of forks. Research efforts continue in the hope of determining when the merchant's token was produced and how many were made.

Commemorative Coins of the United States: A Complete Encyclopedia

by Q. David Bowers



**The Columbian Half Dollar
One Hundred Years Old**

**A Paper Presented To The
Western PA Numismatic Society
by Richard Gaetano
Sept. 1, 1992**

1892-1893 Columbian Exposition Half Dollars



The World's Columbian Exposition

The first United States silver commemorative coins are the 1892 and 1893 half dollars made for sale at a premium at the World's Columbian Exposition, scheduled to open in Chicago in 1892 but postponed until 1893.

In 1890 plans were made for America to celebrate the 400th anniversary of Columbus' landing in the New World by holding an exposition in 1892.¹ The 1876 Centennial Exhibition, held in Philadelphia, was a grand success a decade or so earlier, and now it was intended to outdo this and any other fair ever held. St. Louis, New York

City, Washington, D.C., and Chicago all competed for the honor to host the celebration. The choice was decided by Congress, which passed an act on April 25, 1890, naming Chicago.

An undeveloped 686-acre site on the shore of Lake Michigan was selected for the Exposition grounds. In January 1891 a group of architects met in Chicago to plan the buildings, which were subsequently constructed mainly in the classical style

¹ A note from Walter Breen to the author, March 15, 1991, discussed Columbus. "His born name Cristoforo Colombo means 'Christopher Pigeon.' We owe to Washington Irving the popular myths about Columbus's vanity trying to convince professors at the University of Salamanca that the world is round. The real dispute was over the width of the Atlantic Ocean: the professors' figures were better. Nor did Queen Isabella sell her jewelry to finance his voyage."

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reflecting Greek and Roman influences, and with exteriors made of an artificial composition resembling marble, giving rise to the name "White City" for the structures.

Work proceeded apace, and the Exposition was dedicated on October 21, 1892, but as all exhibits were not yet in place, it was not possible to open the fair to the general public in the 400th anniversary year. Finally, at noon on May 1, 1893, President Grover Cleveland officiated at a ceremony that opened the Exposition grounds to the public. Strains of the *Hallelujah Chorus* greeted the estimated 300,000 individuals who had come to attend the opening day festivities.

The Exposition was intended to showcase American progress in art, architecture, technology, science, agriculture, and other endeavors. No expense was spared to create a virtual city, complete with 160 buildings (many of which were connected by canals plied by gondolas and small steam-powered craft) and 65,000 exhibits devoted to commercial, national, artistic, and other subjects. Separate structures showcased the attractions and products of different states and a number of foreign countries. Sculptures and other works of art decorated many of the open spaces as well as building interiors. Ultimately the event cost an estimated \$30 million to stage and attracted 28 million visitors. Attending the Exposition was the aim of citizens all across America, and to oblige them the various railroads ran special cars and excursions to Chicago. Many individuals made home-town newspaper headlines by walking or bicycling to the Exposition from distant locations.

The World's Columbian Exposition had many numismatic features. The United States Mint exhibit in the Government

Building featured a coining press that struck thousands of brass souvenir medals, which were offered for sale at 25¢ each.¹ Coins from the Mint collection, taken to Chicago from their home in Philadelphia, were on view and were highlighted by the rare 1804 silver dollar and the unique 1849 \$20 gold piece in company with coins from all eras of civilized history. In addition, there were many private exhibits and vendors. For souvenir hunters literally hundreds of different inexpensive tokens, badges, and medals struck in brass, aluminum, white metal, and bronze were available. The Scott Stamp & Coin Company, a leading firm of the era, had two separate sales areas at the fair.

The Souvenir Half Dollars

The idea for a commemorative half dollar was suggested by the manager of the Exposition, who first proposed that the staggering quantity of 40,000,000 pieces be coined, apparently for use as admission tokens to the fair and as souvenirs of the event. Later the requested quantity was reduced, and it was decided to sell the coins for \$1 each in order to raise money to help defray Exposition expenses.

On August 5, 1892, Congress approved a bill providing for a United States silver half dollar of legal weight and fineness, in a quantity not to exceed 5,000,000 pieces (to be known as the Columbian half dollar) with devices to be prescribed by the director of the Mint with the approval of the secretary of the Treasury. It was mandated that the half dollars would be made from metal obtained from obsolete silver coins held by the Treasury, thus freeing Exposition officials from the necessity of arrang-

¹ This press, made by Merrick, had been brought from Philadelphia. Years later, in December 1899 in Philadelphia, the same press was used to strike Lafayette commemorative silver dollars.

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ing for the acquisition of new metal or becoming involved in heated debates in Congress concerning purchases of silver from Western mining interests. It is presumed that Columbian half dollars were made of melted-down early Liberty Seated and other obsolete silver coins including three-cent pieces, half dimes, and trade dollars which had been presented to the Treasury for redemption.

A Controversial Portrait

In 1892 and 1893 the "souvenir coins," as they were called, attracted much attention in newspaper columns across America. The portrait of Columbus to be used on the obverse caused considerable controversy, as seemingly no one could agree on what the famous explorer looked like. The confusion prevailing at the time is reflected by a typical newspaper article:¹

"The authorities have decided that the Columbus whose features are to appear on the souvenir half dollar shall be the one portrayed in the recently-discovered picture which is believed to be by Lorenzo Lotto, a painter whose name is not a very familiar one, but whose portrait work is hardly second to that of Titian. While it is not proved that this picture is the countenance of Columbus, it is asserted that more can be said for it in support of its genuineness than any one of the other 30 alleged portraits....

"The belief in the authenticity of the picture rests rather on what the picture shows than on the imperfect records of its successive ownerships. The person who appears on the canvas answers to the description of the Admiral. The face is of the Genoese type, the lines are those formed by exposure to the weather, and the bronzed, tanned look of the skin is the

result of salt air and southern suns. The dress is the Italian costume of the Columbus age, which appears in no other portrait of the Discoverer.... Absolute certainty is admittedly impossible. Therefore, if the best judgment of experts is that the Lotto portrait has the most chances of genuineness in its favor, it ought to be adopted. This much is certain, that whatever likeness of Columbus is put on five million souvenir half dollars, which will be distributed over all parts of the United States, will become the popular conception of the appearance of the man and will remain so to the end of time."

The final decision was left up to the chief engraver of the Mint, Charles E. Barber, who left Philadelphia on September 23, 1892, to go to Chicago to consult with Director-General Davis of the Exposition. Barber adopted a design from a plaster model by Olin Levi Warner, who in turn took Columbus' portrait from a medal made in Spain in 1892, whose facial image was from a Madrid statue by Jeronimo Suñel, which in succession was taken from a fanciful portrait by Charles Legrand in the Naval Museum in the same city. The most that can be said for the Warner-Barber portrait of Columbus on the obverse of the half dollar is that it is attractively done and probably represents what a typical citizen of Genoa may have looked like in the explorer's time.²

The reverse of the half dollar was executed by George T. Morgan and was mod-

¹ This quotation and others from contemporary clippings are taken from a scrapbook on the subject of World's Columbian Exposition coinage assembled 1892-1893 by an unknown person and now in the possession of the author. Certain of the clippings are not attributed and none is dated.

² U.S.J. (Ulric Stonewall Jackson) Dunbar (1862-1927) was to have designed the Columbian half dollar, and apparently made a plaster model for the obverse using the Lotto portrait, but nothing further came of it. See Taxay, *An Illustrated History of U.S. Commemorative Coinage*, pp. 3 ff. for additional information, including p. 7, which illustrates three sketches by Barber, none of which was adopted, including one whose central motif of an eagle on a scalloped shield was borrowed in concept from the reverse of an 1877 pattern half dollar.

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eled after a replica of Columbus' flagship, the *Santa Maria*, produced in Spain in honor of the 400th anniversary, as also shown on a plaster model by Olin Levi Warner. Two globes below the ship represent the Old World and the New and are stylistically related to the globes shown on the reverses of Spanish milled silver dollars prevalent in the Americas in the 18th century. The Warner models were later an attraction at the Exposition and were viewed by many who purchased half dollars. Although Warner was proud of his work appearing on the Columbian half dollar and in fact mentioned it in at least one biographical sketch, his contribution, never acknowledged by the Mint, has been largely ignored by the numismatic community.

Among other designs suggested for the reverse were a view of the Administration Building at the Exposition, several varieties of perched eagles, and a flotilla consisting of the three vessels of Columbus, the *Niña*, the *Pinta*, and the *Santa Maria*.

A set of commemorative postage stamps was produced in connection with the Columbian Exposition. The *Santa Maria*, as shown on the reverse of the half dollar, is shown on the 3¢ stamp, and the \$5 stamp bears a portrait of Columbus taken from the obverse of the half dollar, except that the face of Columbus is turned in the opposite direction. An admission ticket to the fair, printed by the American Bank Note Company, also displays the same visage. During the ensuing decades numerous events commemorated on coins would also be memorialized on stamps.

Minting the First Half Dollars

The first Columbian half dollar was struck at the Philadelphia Mint on November 19,

1892. Originally the initial coin was intended to be used in opening ceremonies for the Exposition, but by the autumn of 1892 the opening had been delayed and was many months in the offing.

The *Chicago Tribune* carried an account of the production of the first pieces, datelined Philadelphia, November 19, 1892:¹ "It was a \$10,000 beauty that dropped today from the coin press at the United States Mint when the work of coining the Columbian half dollars began. Supt. Bosbyshell was on hand to represent the government, and James W. Ellsworth of the World's Fair Commission represented that body.² There was great interest manifested in the affair because of the big premiums that have been offered for certain of the coins. In addition to the first one, there were also delivered to Mr. Ellsworth the 400th, 1492nd, and 1892nd coins of the new half dollars. Over 2,000 of the souvenirs were struck today, and the work will continue until all of the 5,000,000 donated [*sic*] by Congress are completed....

"When the hour arrived, Supt. Bosbyshell was summoned to the pressroom by Chief Coiner William S. Steele, while Engraver Charles Barber, who designed the famous coin, Chief Clerk M.N. Cobb, and others assembled as witnesses.... Foreman Albert Downing placed one of the blank planchets in the receiver and grasped the lever which raises the lower die, while Edwin Cliff, his assistant, stood at the balance wheel. Unfortunately, the first attempt was a failure—a little flaw caused the coin's rejection.

"The next attempt was made more carefully for the reputation of the coiners

¹ These excerpts are from a transcript of a *Tribune* article published on November 20, 1892, and reprinted in *The Encyclopedia of United States Silver & Gold Commemorative Coins*, p. 59.

² Col. James W. Ellsworth was a numismatist and possessed an extraordinary collection which in the early 1920s was sold to Wayne Raymond and John Work Garrett.

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was at stake and they had resolved that the first approved souvenir of the Exposition should be a marvel of perfection and beauty. The planchet, before being accepted, was examined under the microscope and found without a blemish. For the second time, two workmen turned the press by hand, while the spectators waited in suspense. Again the coin was lifted from the face of the steel die and critically examined by Coiner Steele, Engraver Barber, and Supt. Bosbyshell. Every line was sharply defined, and the strong features of the discoverer of America, which adorn the coin, seemed to look approvingly on the work.

"Cardboard boxes had been prepared for the reception of the coins, much like those in which pills are sold. No finger touched the first of the souvenirs, but the pliers gently clutched it by the rim and conveyed the \$10,000 lump to the box which was immediately sealed and handed to the World's Fair commissioner. After the delivery of the first coin the foreman and his assistant continued coining by hand until they had struck 100 Proof pieces, occupying about an hour in the task. Power was then applied, and the actual work of making 5,000,000 half dollars went rapidly ahead...."¹

What Happened to the First Coins Minted

To capitalize on the intense nationwide interest in the Columbian half dollars, Wyckoff, Seamans & Benedict, makers of the Remington typewriter, garnered much publicity by purchasing the first specimen struck, paying the incredible sum of \$10,000! At the time when the transaction was made, a week's wages for a typical factory worker amounted to \$5 to \$7, and the sum of \$10,000 represented the earn-

ing power of someone for nearly a lifetime! The sparkling \$10,000 beauty was given by the Remington typewriter interests to the new Columbian Museum (later known as the Field Museum of Natural History) in Chicago. In the meantime the Remington Standard Typewriter was endorsed as the official mechanical writing device of the Exposition.

The 400th, 1492nd and 1892nd half dollars, considered to be of special numerical consequence, were also sold at premiums, whereas the remaining coins were offered to the public for \$1 each.

On December 16th the following newspaper notice appeared:

"The first 60,000 of the new Columbian souvenir half dollars were shipped this morning from the United States Mint in this city [Philadelphia]. The first delivery of 10,000 coins left on the 9:50 express for New York City, in possession of John F. Shriver, representing Colonel Elliott F. Shepard. The remaining 50,000, including the '\$10,000 beauty' [the one purchased by the Remington Typewriter interests] and three other valuable pieces, were placed in the hands of the United States Express Company consigned to the sub-treasury at Chicago and left on the Columbian Express over the Pennsylvania Railroad at 4:25 p.m.

"The 50,000 coins destined for Chicago occupied five kegs in sealed bags, marked \$5,000 each. On the head of each keg was nailed a label marked 'Columbian Coins, 10,000 Half Dollars. Assistant Treasurer of the United States, Chicago, Ill.' Each keg

¹ The Swiatek-Breen book, pp. 69-73, presents the possibility that the defective No. 1 coin, struck before the first *approved souvenir* coin was made, was not destroyed but was given the designation No. 2 and later came into the possession of J.K. Robinson, a man who had earlier sought to buy the first 100 pieces struck for \$1 each. Actually, before any coins were struck in the ceremony just described, from one to several pieces were made, per usual procedure, to adjust the die spacing on the press. Usually such set-up pieces (as they are called) are destroyed.

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was sealed in such a manner that the seal must be broken in removing the head.

"Particular attention was devoted by Mint Superintendent Bosbyshell and his assistant to the packing of one keg, which was distinguished from the others by the word 'Special' marked in blue pencil on the head. There were five bags of coins placed in this keg as in the others, but one of them was marked \$4,998 instead of \$5,000. This indicated the omission from contents of four half dollars, one of which is now the most valuable piece in its denomination ever produced. These four were the first, or '\$10,000 beauty,' the 400th, 1492nd, and the 1892nd coins of the new issue. These pieces, on account of their extraordinary value, which was estimated at not less than \$15,000, were placed in a separate package. Each of them was first inserted in a small circular pasteboard box which, after being wrapped in stout paper, was marked as follows:

"No. 1, 400, 1492, 1892, Columbian half dollars. Sealed by C.O. Bosbyshell, Superintendent United States Mint.' This package was sealed and packed in the keg marked 'Special,' after being placed in a wooden cigar box, which was used to prevent the heavy bags of coins from crushing the package. These extraordinary precautions in sealing and packing were taken at the request of the president of World's Fair Commission, who in a letter to the Treasury Department asked that the coins be so arranged that they need not be disturbed by the sub-treasurer at Chicago. 'One of the pieces,' he wrote, 'has already been sold for \$10,000, and it is very important that we should be able to show the purchaser that they are the identical coins called for on the separate certificates.'"

Subsequently a Chicago newspaper re-

ported the arrival of the first shipment:

"Barrels of money were opened yesterday. This money was all of one denomination—silver half dollars with the glitter of the Mint in their milled edges. The face of Columbus was on one side; on the other side the caravel and two hemispheres, with the price marked in plain figures. A plain little man with iron-grey whiskers, chin-chilla overcoat, and black derby hat went over to the Government Building yesterday afternoon accompanied by a dray and some hired help. He and his men loaded up five kegs of silver money and drove away to the offices of the World's Columbian Exposition.

"It was a little after 12 o'clock when a big wagon from Marshall Field's wholesale store pulled up on Quincy Street to await orders. It was drawn by a team of heavy bays and the driver was 'Elzie' Roe. Up in the fourth floor of the Rand-McNally building President Higinbotham was waiting for Vice-President Fred W. Peck and Treasurer Seeberger to get on their coats. The three dropped down the elevator, pursued by a curious crowd. Mr. Higinbotham went out to Quincy Street and waved his hand at 'Elzie' on the high seat. Then he and Mr. Peck and Mr. Seeberger made a shortcut toward the Government Building with the dray close behind. The three Swedes with yarn mittens and comforters were waiting on Jackson Street when Mr. Higinbotham showed the dray where to back up. Their names were Charley Knutson, Otto Johnson, and Emil Olson. Charley went upstairs with the president to load the kegs in the elevator.

"About 20 people were waiting outside the Sub-treasury railing when Mr. Higinbotham came in and shook hands with Cashier Whittemore through a square

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hole. The cashier pulled a string unlatching a side door, and a crowd went in to look at the kegs. President Higinbotham produced five large and fancy drafts upon the sub-treasurer, each calling for \$5,000 in Columbian half dollars. He sat at a table and wrote on the back of each: 'World's Columbian Exposition, H. N. Higinbotham, President.'

"That's all right," said Mr. Whittemore, accepting them.

"Charley Knutson began rolling the kegs into the elevator. Mr. Higinbotham disappeared into the wire cage carrying one of the sacks. The first three kegs were loaded on a hand truck at the foot of the elevator and wheeled out to the wagon. The other two came down a moment later. Mr. Higinbotham sat on one of the kegs, Mr. Peck took another, and Mr. Seeberger sat in gingerly fashion upon the sharp edge of the third. The Swede boys held onto the stakes along the side of the wagon bed, and the load moved west on Jackson Street to La Salle, north on La Salle to Quincy and west on Quincy to the Rand-McNally entrance. Here 50 people saw the stout workmen, two to a keg, carry the 300 pound packages to the elevator, which lifted them to the fourth floor. They were rolled into the little room adjoining Mr. Seeberger's office. Among those who came in were directors Thomas B. Bryan, J. W. Ellsworth, Adolph Nathan, and C. H. Schwab, Secretary H. O. Edmunson, J. F. McClain (representing Wyckoff, Seamans & Benedict), and a number of newspapermen.

"Gi'me that mallet." President Higinbotham threw off his coat and told the people to stand back. Someone handed him the mallet and cold-chisel, and with determined blows Mr. Higinbotham bat-

tered in the head of the keg marked 'Special.'

"There it is," said Mr. Peck. Pushed in at one side of the snugly-tucked canvas bag was a cigar box. It was lifted out and inside was the packet showing daubs of sealing wax. Across the space was the certificate of Director Bosbyshell of the Philadelphia Mint that it contained the first Columbian half dollar coined at the Mint [and] that it contained numbers 400, 1492, and 1892. This packet was torn open and the shell was given to Mr. Schwab for safekeeping. The envelope marked 'Number 1' was then carefully opened—the other three being tucked into the president's inside pocket. Out came a pill box and a folded piece of paper. The paper was another certificate, all signed and backed by affidavit, to show that the coin in the box was really number one.

"The box was sealed. Mr. Higinbotham ran his knife around the rim, and then lifting the cotton showed the precious white bits of metal. Without allowing his fingers to touch the coin he folded a bit of cotton over the edge and held up the original souvenir. 'This coin has been bought by Wyckoff, Seamans & Benedict of New York for \$10,000,' said he. 'It is the largest amount ever paid for a coin.'

"The little company applauded. Mr. McClain responded briefly for the purchasers. The coin was fastened into a metal hoop which swung at the end of a three-inch chain. This chain was attached to a square glass which was the lid for a glass cube. The lid was put on and sealed. Three cheers were given, and the witnesses signed another certificate. The other kegs were opened and the employees began the work of dividing the coins into small lots for distribution to the banks.

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"After the excitement attending the arrival of the coins had subsided, the prosaic work of counting them out began. Judge Bryan, whose public spirit had prompted the first big subscription, got the first 5,000. They were taken to the Jennings Trust Company bank on Dearborn Street in the original packages bearing the Treasury seal. Judge Bryan reserved one of the canvas sacks full of souvenirs for the accommodation of Exposition officials and personal friends, and the rest were distributed by the trust company to a long line of subscribers who had been waiting impatiently to see the first of the new half dollars.

"Newspaper men got the first coins distributed by the trust company, and then the long lines of subscribers filed past windows and exchanged dollars for half-dollars. Directors of the Exposition stood around Judge Bryan's office in the Rand-McNally headquarters and awaited the chance to put the souvenirs in their pockets. Before the afternoon was over the corridors leading to and from the judge's room resounded with the clink of coins and the varying criticisms of amateur numismatists.

"Treasurer Seeberger's force worked well into the night making up packages to correspond with orders filed for souvenirs. Over 5,000 orders are on the books, and the first 432 of these applications will exhaust yesterday's installment. Treasurer Seeberger says, however, that another shipment of 700,000 coins is expected to arrive Thursday or Friday at the latest, and that consignment will just about fill the requisitions made.

"Persons living in Chicago may secure souvenirs in any number by leaving orders with any of the Chicago banks or by personal application at the treasurer's office, fourth floor, Rand-McNally building, 168

Adams Street. Receipts will be given and orders filled in the order of application. Persons living outside of Chicago can have coins delivered to them, carriage prepaid, by ordering through the nearest bank; if no bank is accessible a money order or registered letter addressed to the Treasurer, World's Columbian Exposition, and giving directions for shipment will secure the souvenirs at a net cost to purchaser of \$1 each coin."

Public Reaction to the Columbian Halves

It had long been the case that, when a new United States coin was presented to the public, great criticism erupted. In 1793, when the chain-design cent first made its appearance in circulation, a newspaper article related that Miss Liberty appeared to be in a fright and that the linked chain device on the reverse was but an ill omen for a nation desiring liberty. In 1878, when the first Morgan silver dollar reached the public, the eagle on the reverse was described as a buzzard. Few people liked it. In 1892 the same was true of the Columbian half dollar as well. When Treasury officials in Washington saw the first pieces, they reacted with disappointment, as this article datelined Washington, November 30, 1892, relates:

"Two samples of the new World's Fair souvenir coins came from the Director of the Mint in Philadelphia this morning to be tested. There was a rush among the Treasury officials to get a look at the first of the new half dollars that have yet been sent to the Treasury. The samples were a disappointment, to say the least. The obverse side on which the Columbus head appears comes in for considerable criticism by the Treasury experts. 'Whatever value attaches

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to the coins,' said a Mint officer, 'will be due to the fact that they are souvenirs and not for any beauty which they possess. In fact they are the ugliest coins I ever saw.'

As noted earlier in the present book, it is more popular to complain about something than to compliment it. Writing in his study, *U.S. Commemorative Coinage*, Arlie Slabaugh recognized this fact: "The odds are at least two to one that *any* new issue of coin will find plenty of detractors.... So there is not much point in my repeating such criticisms of most coins. As the old saying goes, 'One man's meat is another's poison.'"

In the case of the 1892-1893 Columbian half dollars, numismatists and members of the public tried to outdo each other in coming up with innovative complaints. How refreshingly different it would be to read a comment such as: "What a gorgeous design this is!"

A month or so later a newspaper report noted that the Mint was working full speed ahead to churn out the production order of 5,000,000 pieces: "Advice from Washington gave notice that the Treasury has ordered the shipment of 68,000 souvenir coins to Chicago. These coins will be the last with 1892 on them, the rest of the 5 million bearing the date of 1893. So far the Treasury has paid out 720,000 half dollars on approved vouchers. The Mint is running full capacity, 20,000 coins daily, and at that rate it will be until the last of July before the issue is completed."

Many commentaries concerning the Columbian half dollars appeared in various papers throughout the autumn of 1892 and early 1893. It seems as though everyone had an opinion, many of them centering on the seemingly unconscionable profit

to be made by selling a fifty-cent piece for one dollar. Samples:

From the *Philadelphia Call*: "The average man won't stick about the World's Fair souvenir half dollar. Any other will do as well. Perhaps the proposition to sell the 50¢ souvenirs at the World's Fair for \$1 is an evidence of what visitors to Chicago may expect in the general increase in prices."

Pittsburgh Chronicle: "The coinage of the souvenir half dollars has begun at the Philadelphia Mint, and the superintendent expects to have 30,000 of them ready by the end of the month. Talking about money making, did you ever see anything like the profit Chicago will get out of the remelting of old half dollars and making 'souvenir' coins of them?"

San Francisco Examiner: "The newest thing out. Buy your half-dollar for a dollar and sell it for two dollars. We don't hear much about the two-dollar victims yet, but suppose they will be forthcoming. The picture of Columbus upon the souvenir coins will be ideal, so it is stated. It is not altogether clear how it could be anything else, since the roving gentleman...neglected to leave any authentic portrait. Those available range from figures of a pallid student to a bewhiskered brigand, each probably as wrong as the other."

Galveston Daily News: "The front side of the coin has an elegant likeness of the late Sitting Bull. This, however, is said to be meant for Columbus. The patriotic American can take his choice, and the know-nothings certainly will claim the head to be intended for Sitting Bull because of that gentleman being an American. On the right shoulder appears the letter B. This certainly indicates the location of either a boil

1892-1893 Columbian Exposition Half Dollars

or a barnacle.¹ There is also a likeness of Columbus' ship under full sail. At first blush the ship seems to be on wheels, but closer examination shows that the two wheels are the eastern and western hemispheres. The ship seems to be surrounded by a herd of porpoises, but probably this is meant for waves. There is also a fishing pole rigged out of an after port in the cabin of the ship, and one gathers an idea that the venturesome mariner is either baiting his hook and lying about a bite he has just had, or has hauled in a fish, for the line is taken aboard ship. The figures 1492 appear beneath the vessel. The coin is of the same size and weight as the old run of half dollars, and for all they are sold at a heavy premium, the purchasing power is but ten beers."

Minneapolis Times: "A dollar will go no further in Chicago than in some other places, but Chicago is the only town that can sell 50¢ for \$1."

Colorado Sun: "The World's Fair people count upon making a good thing by selling their five million souvenir half dollars at premium. The Chicago propensity for speculating in futures cannot be restrained."

New York Sun: "With a high collar and a little attention from the hair cutter, the Christopher Columbus on the new Columbian half dollar would answer very well for the Right Honorable William Ewart Gladstone."

Philadelphia Ledger: "If it were not known in advance whose vignette adorns the Columbian souvenir half dollar, the average observer would be undecided as to whether it is intended to represent Daniel Webster or Henry Ward Beecher."

Boston Globe: "The first view of the new Columbian souvenir coin inevitably leads

to expression of regret that Columbus wasn't a better looking man."

The preceding commentary reflects that the Columbian half dollar created a controversy in its own time, thus setting the stage for arguments, differences of opinion, and controversies that would swirl around numerous later commemorative issues, continuing unabated to the present day.

Distribution of the Columbian Exposition Coins

The coinage in 1892 amounted to 950,000 Columbian Exposition half dollars, whereas those dated 1893 were produced to the extent of 4,052,105, for a total of 5,002,105. This amounted to the authorized quantity of five million coins plus 2,105 extras minted for assay purposes.

Visitors to the fair were given the opportunity to buy souvenir half dollars for the much-criticized price of one dollar each. Displays of Columbian half dollars helped promote sales. In the rotunda of the Administration Building at the fair was a model of the Treasury Building in Washington, constructed of Columbian half dollars, measuring 20 feet long, 11 feet wide, and four feet high.² Viewers were advised that "coins sold will be taken from the columns" of the model, but as no coins could be removed until the closing of the Exposition, it is to be inferred that most intending purchasers bought their Columbian half dollars elsewhere at the event.

Clipped Columbian half dollars used to construct the angles and corners of the model were struck in white metal rather than the usual silver alloy. In the nearby

¹ A little humor here. B was the initial of Charles E. Barber, chief engraver of the Mint.

² Described and illustrated in *The Book of the Fair*, Bancroft, 1893, p. 302.

1892-1893 Columbian Exposition Half Dollars

Liberal Arts Building there was another model, a 20-foot-high shaft, also made of commemorative half dollars.

After the Exposition closed and sales efforts ended, 3,600,000 half dollars remained unsold, of which about 1,400,000 were held by the Treasury in Washington, 960,000 in Chicago, and 147,700 at the Philadelphia Mint. What to do with this vast hoard was hotly debated, for the managers of the Exposition felt that the investment of those who paid \$1 each for the coins should be protected.

The *New York Sun*, December 10, 1893, printed the following:¹ "It was reported that Mr. Ellsworth, representing the commissioners of the Exposition, called at the Treasury Department and paid to Acting Secretary Curtis \$40,300 to defray the cost of transporting and recoinage the unsold half dollars which was said to exceed the total face value of \$1,700,000. Secretary Carlisle was requested to recoin the twenty-five and fifty-cent souvenirs at the expense of the government, but this he declined to do, and notified the Commission unless it bore the expense of the recoinage he would issue the souvenir pieces at their face value. As this would materially reduce the value of those in the hands of purchasers and speculative holders, Mr. Ellsworth was sent to make the necessary deposit."

Apparently, the preceding account was inaccurate, for in 1894 the Treasury announced that the remaining Columbian half dollars were available for face value to anyone desiring them. Takers were few, so many coins were subsequently put into circulation, and others were melted. By the turn of the century Columbian half dollars were familiar items in pocket change.

When all was said and done, 950,000

Columbian half dollars dated 1892 were distributed, and 1,550,405 were released dated the following year, 1893. This amounted to about half of the original mintage of five million coins.

Collecting Columbian Half Dollars

As the numismatic fraternity constituted only a small part of the American population in 1892 and 1893, relatively few coins were carefully preserved by coin collectors. Today most surviving Columbian half dollars show the effects of wear, either of casual handling from being saved as souvenirs by non-numismatists or from having been passed from hand to hand as a medium of exchange.

While most Columbian half dollars were minted with lustrous, frosty surfaces, a few Proofs were made and possibly a few thousand prooflike business strikes were produced. It was suggested that Proof Columbian half dollars be included in regular silver Proof sets for the year 1892, but the idea was vetoed when it was realized that per current Mint policy regular-design Proof half dollars were sold for just a few cents above face value, but that something over \$1 would have to be charged for a Proof Columbian half dollar in order to be consistent with the intended \$1 issue price for Uncirculated pieces. The two philosophies could not be reconciled, and the idea was dropped.

When I first started collecting coins in the early 1950s I quickly learned that the commonest 19th-century coin issues (apart from Treasury-held Morgan silver dollar reserves) were 1883 Liberty nickels without CENTS and 1892 and 1893 Columbian half dollars. In 1953 you could buy all the

¹ As reprinted in the *American Journal of Numismatics*, January 1894

1892-1893 Columbian Exposition Half Dollars

Columbian half dollars you wanted for 60 to 65 cents each. Indeed, around that time a coin dealer in downtown Boston showed a bushel basket full of them in his shop window.

Columbian half dollars remain very common today, and hundreds of thousands or even more exist, most of which are in grades from about EF-40 to MS-60. Higher level Mint State coins are also plentiful, up to about MS-63, above which examples are somewhat elusive. Truly pristine pieces are hard to find. I consider the Columbian half dollar design to be one of the most attractive in the commemorative series, and a lightly toned Uncirculated specimen is an object of beauty, even though it may

not be exciting from a rarity viewpoint.

GRADING SUMMARY: Most specimens show signs of friction or contact on the high areas of Columbus' portrait on the obverse and on the ship's sails on the reverse. Some coins are lightly struck on the highest areas of the portrait and/or lack ship sail details on the reverse. In general, 1892-dated coins are better struck than those dated 1893. Beware of deeply toned coins whose toning masks wear; sometimes these are sold in slabs bearing high technical grades. Most Uncirculated coins have very attractive frosty lustre. Prooflike pieces are occasionally seen and are usually dated 1892.

1892 Columbian Exposition Half Dollar

SUMMARY OF CHARACTERISTICS

Commemorating: 400th anniversary of Columbus' landing in the New World; 1893 World's Columbian Exposition

Obverse motif: Portrait of Columbus

Reverse motif: Ship and two globes

Authorization date: August 5, 1892

Dates on coins: 1892 (also 1492)

Date when coins were actually minted: 1892

Mint used: Philadelphia

Maximum quantity authorized: 5,000,000 (also includes coins dated 1893)

Total quantity minted (including assay coins): 950,000

Assay coins (included in above): Unknown

Quantity melted: None

Net number distributed (including assay coins): 950,000

Issued by: World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, Illinois (initial coins were distributed by the Jennings Trust Co., Chicago, and other Chicago banks; see text)

Standard original packaging: Apparently, no official packaging, but various banks (Merchants and Manufacturers National Bank, Pittsburgh, Pa.; The Paterson National Bank, Paterson, N.J.; and others) distributed coins in small, burgundy-colored leather holders (round and square in shape) with gold imprinting. Examples also exist with no bank reference but were imprinted with only "COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION" encircling "1492 —

1892-1893 Columbian Exposition Half Dollars

CHICAGO — 1892"; Wells, Fargo & Co. (1892 only) and McConway & Torley Co. (Pittsburgh, Pa.) had special presentation holders, envelopes, and leather boxes with velour interiors made¹

Official sale price: \$1

Designer of obverse: Charles E. Barber from a plaster model by Olin Levi Warner, taken in turn from a Spanish medal

Designer of reverse: George T. Morgan from a plaster model by Olin Levi Warner, taken in turn from a ship model

Interesting facts: First legal tender U.S. coin to depict a foreigner; first commemorative half dollar; issued in connection with the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition, a fair held a year late.

MARKET INDEX

(average market prices)

1895 MS-60 to 63 55¢	1955 MS-60 to 63 \$2
1900 MS-60 to 63 60¢-\$1	1960 MS-60 to 63 \$4
1905 MS-60 to 63 60¢-\$1	1965 MS-60 to 63 \$6
1910 MS-60 to 63 60¢-\$1	1970 MS-60 to 63 \$8
1915 MS-60 to 63 55¢-\$1	1975 MS-60 to 63 \$25
1920 MS-60 to 63 75¢	1980 MS-60 to 63 \$160
1925 MS-60 to 63 75¢	1985 MS-60 to 63 \$280
1930 MS-60 to 63 75¢	1986 MS-60 \$80, MS-63 \$175, MS-64 \$380; MS-65 \$1,300
1935 MS-60 to 63 \$1	1990 (spring) MS-60 \$75, MS-63 \$500, MS- 64 \$1,425, MS-65 \$3,850
1936 (summer) MS-60 to 63 \$1.25	1990 (December) MS-60 \$55, MS-63 \$380, MS-64 \$800, MS-65 \$3,200
1940 MS-60 to 63 \$1	
1945 MS-60 to 63 \$1.25	
1950 MS-60 to 63 \$1.25	

Notes: Vast quantities of 1892 and 1893 Columbian half dollars were placed into circulation for face value, and examples did not command a significant premium on the collectors' market until decades later. This will explain why coins were available in 1895 for slightly over face value. For a long period of time dealers' prices ranged from slightly over face value to about \$1. Even during the commemorative boom of the 1930s, Columbian half dollars were often omitted from dealers' advertisements, as the coins had little value or interest at the time.

1893 Columbian Exposition Half Dollar

SUMMARY OF CHARACTERISTICS

(Also see preceding listing)

Dates on coins: 1893 (also 1492)

Date when coins were actually minted: 1893

¹ The author acknowledges the generous help of Donald L. and Helen L. Carmody in furnishing information concerning standard original packaging for various commemorative series.

1892-1893 Columbian Exposition Half Dollars

Mint used: Philadelphia

Maximum quantity authorized: 5,000,000 (includes issues dated 1892)

Total quantity minted (including assay coins): 4,052,105

Assay coins (included in above): 2,105

Quantity melted: 2,501,700

Net number distributed (including assay coins): 1,550,405

Standard original packaging: Apparently, none (see listing under 1892 for private packaging); Columbian half dollars with ribbons and clasps were produced in 1893 as souvenirs of Chicago Day at the Exposition

Official sale price: \$1

Interesting fact: Most of the 1893 mintage went to the melting pot.

MARKET INDEX

(average market prices)

1895 MS-60 to 63 55¢	1955 MS-60 to 63 \$1.25
1900 MS-60 to 63 65¢-\$1	1960 MS-60 to 63 \$3
1905 MS-60 to 63 60¢-\$1	1965 MS-60 to 63 \$4
1910 MS-60 to 63 60¢-\$1	1970 MS-60 to 63 \$7
1915 MS-60 to 63 55¢-\$1	1975 MS-60 to 63 \$26
1920 MS-60 to 63 65¢	1980 MS-60 to 63 \$155
1925 MS-60 to 63 65¢	1985 MS-60 to 63 \$265
1930 MS-60 to 63 75¢	1986 MS-60 \$80, MS-63 \$175, MS-64 \$380, MS-65 \$1,300
1935 MS-60 to 63 \$1	1990 (spring) MS-60 \$75, MS-63 \$490, MS- 64 \$1,500, MS-65 \$5,000
1936 (summer) MS-60 to 63 75¢	1990 (December) MS-60 \$55, MS-63 \$325, MS-64 \$800, MS-65 \$3,200
1940 MS-60 to 63 75¢	
1945 MS-60 to 63 \$1.25	
1950 MS-60 to 63 \$1	

Note: For a time in the market (see spring 1990) the 1893 Columbian half dollar in MS-65 grade was trading at a higher level than comparably graded coins dated 1892, an anomalous situation in the pricing history of these two issues.

A Numismatic History of the Higley Coppers

by Wayne K. Howren

Presented to
The Western Pennsylvania Numismatic Society
December 1, 1992

Introduction

The Higley Coppers represent one of the earliest coinage attempts in the American colonies. Their origins remain shrouded in mystery despite over a century of numismatic inquiry and comment. Walter Breen aptly described the Higley series (along with other pre-revolutionary local issues) as follows: "About all pieces in this group, ... two remarks apply: They are exceedingly rare, and they are swathed in mystery."

Today seven major types of Higley Coppers are known, comprising thirteen different varieties and die combinations (see Hodder, 1991). All are rare. Breen lists a total of just 51 known examples of all types and varieties. The most common type (Breen 242, Hodder 5) boasts just 15 known examples.

This paper briefly summarizes the known information on the series, and presents an annotated chronological bibliography of published information from 1845 to date. This list is preliminary and incomplete, but encompasses all the major information known to numismatists. The chronological ordering allows the reader to follow the development over time of the current body of information on the Higley Coppers.

The Coiner

Dr. Samuel Higley was born in Simsbury, CT. about 1687. He was the eighth child of Capt. John Higley, who eventually sired 16 children by two wives. His mother Hannah died when Samuel was seven years old. Possessed of a "scientific and original mind", he obtained a degree from Yale, becoming first a schoolmaster, then a surgeon. He later abandoned these fields for the study of metallurgy. In 1727 he pioneered an early process for making steel. Soon afterwards he bought a large tract of land near Granby CT, discovered copper, and opened a mine which exported huge quantities of the metal to England.

In 1737 Higley began striking his copper into coins, and these soon found their way into local circulation. Legend has it that Higley often personally spent his coppers at a local tavern.

Dr. Samuel Higley died at the age of 50, while aboard a ship carrying a load of his copper ore to England for processing. The ship was lost at sea in May, 1737. It is believed that Samuel's older brother John and two partners continued the coinage through 1739.

The Coins

The nominal denomination of all Higley pieces is three pence. All types but one bear the roman numeral III. The specimens believed to be first issued by Higley bear the obverse legend: IRE VALVE OF THRE PENNE. The primary obverse device is a standing deer facing left. The reverse features three hammers, the word CONNECTICVT, and the date 1737.

Other obverse types bear the legend: VALVE ME AS YOU PLEASE. One piece pictures a wheel in place of the deer, and carries the legend THE WHEEL GOES ROUND.

Another reverse legend appearing with the three hammers is: I AM GOOD COPPER. Another type shows a broad axe in place of the hammers, and carries the legend: J CUT MY WAY THROUGH.

Four of the types bear the date 1737; two are undated, and one is dated 1739. None bear the 1738 date, although Breen and others speculate that the undated specimens were indeed struck in 1738.

The End of the Higley Coppers

It may never be known exactly why the coinage of Higley coppers was stopped. Clem Bailey notes that British penalties for counterfeiting were quite lenient until 1740. An order issued by the Crown on August 5, 1740 warned colonial governors to strictly enforce the regulations. While the edict was directed toward counterfeit paper money, and was largely ineffective, it may have discouraged the coiners from continuing.

The Higley coinage was extensive; at least eight obverse and five reverse dies were used. Crosby notes one possible explanation for the disappearance of the coins; their copper was so pure that jewelers sought them out to use as an alloy in making gold.

A Chronological Bibliography of the Higley Coppers

1845 Phelps, Noah A., History of Simsbury, Granby, and Canton from 1642 to 1845, Hartford, CT, 1845

- * Perhaps the first printed mention of Higley Coppers
- * Coins passed for two shillings and sixpence

1858 Hickox, John H., An Historical Account of American Coinage, Albany, NY, 1858

- * One of the earliest works on American Numismatics
- * By necessity, drew heavily on primary sources
- * Draws on Phelps 1845 (footnoted)
- * Lists two types
- * Calls maker "Dr. Samuel Higley"

1859 Dickeson, Montreville W., The American Numismatical Manual, 1859

- * Overshadowed Hickox's work; more elaborate and detailed
- * Lists five types
- * Also spells name "Highley"
- * Describes Higley as a blacksmith; chides Hickox for calling him a doctor
- * Says Higley was a counterfeiter
- * Describes an electrotype

1860 Phelps, Richard H., History of Newgate of Connecticut, Albany, NY, 1860

- * Does not assign Higley a first name, but spells last name "Higley"
- * Both plagiarizes and refutes Dickeson
- * Asserts Higley was not a counterfeiter
- * Primary source for Crosby's work

1861 Prime, W.C., Coins, Medals, and Seals, New York, 1861
(Chapter 6, Colonial American Coins)

- * Notes both spellings of name; prefers "Higley"
- * Mentions a court ruling against a John Higley (wrong person)
- * Does not mention Samuel Higley
- * Does not take sides in the "Dr. vs Blacksmith" argument
- * Mentions "several varieties", but doesn't describe

them

* Mentions another court case valuing a Higley at \$50
(this price said to be "exorbitant" vs \$3-\$25 range)

1875 Crosby, Sylvester S., The Early Coins of America, (Patterns and Tokens: The Granby or Higley Coppers)

* First numismatic description of types and varieties
(three obverse dies, four reverse dies)

* First entries in pedigree chain (Appleton, Parmelee, Eushnell, Frovoot, Crosby)

* Confirms goldsmith usage of Higleys for pure copper alloy

* Asserted that Dr. Samuel Higley could not have made the pieces, since he was dead by 1737

* Ascribes the pieces to John Higley

1876 Phelps, Richard W., Newgate of Connecticut: Its Origin and Early History (Chapter Two: Granby Coppers), pl9-23 (A revision of the 1860 Phelps book)

1896 Johnson, Mary Coffin, The Higleys and Their Ancestry, New York, 1896 (3rd ed. pub. 1973)

* Established that Samuel Higley was responsible for initial issue prior to his death in May 1737.

* Old error corrected: Samuel Higley was not a doctor

1913 Wood, Rowland, A New Variety of the Higley Coppers, The Numismatist, July 1913

* Announces discovery of "The Wheele Goes Round" variety

1927 Mitchelson, Joseph C., The Higley Coppers, The Numismatist, December 1927

* Summarizes information collated during the ANA convention in Hartford, CT.

* Provides additional historical information on the Higley family and the copper mines.

* Interesting side-note about Fro Viets, who unsuccessfully tried to buy a Higley copper from a man in Suffield, CT (more info on the same court case mentioned by Prime)

1947 Robbins, T.W., Background of the Higley Coppers, The Numismatist, August 1947

- * Repeated earlier historical accounts of Higley family and the copper mines
- * Attributed the coinage to John Higley
- * Author visited the mine site
- * Current owner told of a failed attempt to revive the mine in 1907

1955 Moore, Richard D. The Higley Coppers 1737 - 1739 (in collaboration with Cyril H. Hawley, Hartford Numismatic Society) in The Connecticut Historical Society Bulletin, Vol. 20, No. 3, July 1955, p69-73

- * Cites Higley's 1727 petition to develop iron ore; established Higley as a pioneer in steel development
- * Cites Johnson's book and other sources to assert the pieces were initially made by Dr. Samuel Higley
- * Speculates that the issue was continued by John Higley (Samuel's older brother), with Rev. Timothy Woodbridge and William Cradock
- * Notes that two Higley Coppers are now owned by the Connecticut Historical Society

1965 Vlack, Robert A., Early American Coins

- * Summarized all facts and speculations to date
- * Listed all seven known types

1976 Bailey, Clement F., Dr. Samuel Higley and His Coppers, The Numismatist, September, 1976, p1955-1966

- * Draws heavily on the Johnson book
- * Notes that experts were divided on the authenticity of the Wood/Garrett "THE WHEELLE GOES ROUND" specimen
- * Provides more information on Eno Viets: sold his house, next owner tore it down in 1859 and discovered a Higley Copper. Viets went to court and was awarded payment of \$50 plus court costs.

1971 Taxay, Don, The Comprehensive Catalogue and Encyclopedia of United States Coins, Scott Publishing Company, 1971

- * Short listing of the seven known types
- * Included pedigree chains
- * Excellent pictorial chart of obverse-reverse die marriages

1979 Hancock, Virgil and Spanbauer, Larry, Standard Catalog of Counterfeit and Altered United States Coins, New York, NY 1979

* Describes electrotypes and cast copies

1979 Bowers, G. David, The History of United States Coinage as Illustrated by The Garrett Collection, 1979

* Summary of known information; nothing new

1988 Breen, Walter, Walter Breen's Complete Encyclopedia of U.S. and Colonial Coins, New York, 1988 (Chapter 4, Prerevolutionary Local Issues, section ii. Higley's Coppers (1737-1739))

* Incorporates all information known to date

* Lists the seven types, with variety and pedigree information, as well as diagnostic information for the various copies

* Provides rarity estimates for each type

* Notes that a complete set has never been assembled

1991 Hodder, Michael, Known Varieties of the Higley Coppers, in The American Numismatic Association Centennial Anthology, p6

* Complete listing of all types and varieties known to date; total of seven types, thirteen die varieties

Recent Auction Records

1976 Krugjohann, Bowers and Ruddy Galleries, May 14-15, 1976

* One specimen offered (1737 "VALVE ME AS YOU PLFASE")

1980 Garrett III, Bowers and Ruddy Galleries, October 1-2, 1980

* Five different types offered, including the unique "The Wheele Goes Round" specimen. (\$75,000)

1983 Roper, Stack's, December 8-9, 1983

* Seven coins offered, six different types, including the unique "The Wheele Goes Round" specimen from the Garrett collection (\$60,500)

1984 Brand, Auctions by Bowers and Merena, Inc., June 1984.

* Two types offered

1984 Picker, Stack's, October 24, 1984

* Two types offered

* One unlisted variety

1987 Norweb, Auctions by Powers and Merena, October 12-13, 1987

* Two types offered, including a variety not in Garrett or Roper sales

* One holed specimen

1988 Oechsner, Stack's, September 8-9, 1988

* One specimen (1739 Broad Axe)

have normally brought five-figure prices. However, over 99% of those offered at fixed prices, especially before the 1970s, have proved to be forgeries: casts, electrotypes, or worn-down Bolen imitations. Casts are porous and may show minute raised bubbles; electrotypes have lead cores and normally show edge seams. The ring test (see Glossary) elicits only a dull thud. Bolen's imitations are described below. Authentication is mandatory! No complete collection of Higley's coppers has yet been assembled.

HIGLEY'S COPPERS

Designer, Engraver, Dr. Samuel Higley and associates. Mint, Higley's, Granby, Conn. Composition, pure copper. Diameter, about $18/16$ " = 28.6 mm, rarely $19/16$ " = 30 mm. Weight, variable as noted.

Grade range, POOR to FINE. No grading standard established. We suggest GOOD: All inscriptions legible unless obscured by double striking.

238 1737 THE VALVE OF THREE PENCE./CONNECTICUT. About 12 known.

Crosby, Pl. VIII, 17, 18; Rulau-E Conn. 1. Three obv. vars. 119.8–151.1 grs. = 7.763–9.791 gms. Bolen's copies (Crosby, Pl. VIII, 30) have a raised dot within C of PENCE, no die buckling, no multiple striking; silver [2], copper [40] (1864), latter 123.5–164.4 grs. = 8.003–10.65 gms. Dr. Frank Smith Edwards later bought Bolen's dies and made nickel and brass strikings; quantities unknown but very small.



239 1737 Same obv./I AM GOOD COPPER 2 known.

Crosby, Pl. VIII, 19; Rulau-E Conn. 2. 1) John Allan, McCoy:1666, Bushnell:190, Parmelee.

240 1737 VALVE ME AS YOU PLEASE./I AM GOOD COPPER. 3 known.

Crosby, Pl. VIII, 20; Rulau-E Conn. 4. 1) Mitchelson, CSL. 2) Parmelee, B. G. Johnson, Newman. Ill. in Taxay {1971, 1976}. 3) Krugjohann:23, Roper:150, \$2,420, 155.1 grs. = 10.05 gms., Ill. Compare next.



241 1737 VALUE ME AS YOU PLEASE./I AM GOOD COPPER. 8 known.

Crosby, Pl. VIII, 21, 22; Rulau-E Conn. 3. Three obv. vars. Ellsworth, Garrett:1304, \$8,000. 126.2–144.1 grs. = 8.178–9.338 gms.



242 n.d. (1738?) Same/Axe, J.CUT.MY.WAY.THROUGH. About 15 known.

Crosby, Pl. VIII, 23, 24, 25. Three obv. vars. Rulau-E Conn. 5. Axe handle points to Y, unlike the 1739. Miller, Garrett:1305, "EF," \$45,000, 162.2 grs. = 10.51 gms. Others as light as 110 grs. = 7.13 gms.



Ex J. W. Garrett: 1307. Courtesy Bowers & Ruddy Galleries, Inc.

243 n.d. (1738?) THE WHEEL GOES ROUND./As preceding. Unique.

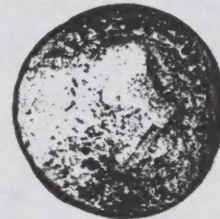
Rulau-E Conn. 6. Discovered by Howland Wood, NUM 7/13. 151.9 grs. = 9.843 gms. Wood, Ellsworth, Garrett:1306, \$75,000, Roper:154, \$60,500, L.I. specialist.



Ex J. W. Garrett: 1305. Courtesy Bowers & Ruddy Galleries, Inc.

244 1739 Type of 242. 10 known.

Crosby, Pl. VIII, 26; Rulau-E Conn. 7. Axe handle points to T. Two obv. dies, both earlier used on 242. Ellsworth, Garrett:1307, \$4,500, 119.5 grs. = 7.743 gms.; others as heavy as 178 grs. = 11.53 gms.



Ex J. W. Garrett: 1306. Courtesy Bowers & Ruddy Galleries, Inc.

iii. UNDATED APOCRYPHAL FARTHING

The NEW YORKE IN AMERICA farthing token first reached public attention in the *Historical Magazine* (Oct. 1861) through one of the lead strikings. Nothing is known of its origin or purpose. Its rev. device (Venus and Cupid under a palm tree) suggests propaganda for the colonies as a place to enjoy life. As the spelling YORKE with the final E occurs intermittently between 1664 and the 1770s, this does not permit a better guess

Known Varieties of the Higley Coppers

by Michael Hodder

- Type 1.** Deer standing left. THE.VALVE.OF.THREE.PENCE
Three crowned hammers. CONNECTICVT.1737

Die Varieties

- 1-A (Crosby-17). R-8. EE of THREE above inner circle.
1.1-A (Crosby-18). R-7. EE of THREE touch inner circle.

- Type 2.** Obverse 1.1
Three crowned hammers. I.AM.GOOD.COPPER.1737

Die Varieties

- 1.1-B (Crosby-19). R-8.

- Type 3.** Deer standing left. VALVE.ME.AS.YOU.PLEASE.III
Three crowned hammers. I.AM.GOOD.COPPER.1737

Die Varieties.

- 2-B (Crosby unlisted; Roper:150). R-7. Lower right hammer head above 3 in date.
2-Ba (Crosby-20). R-8. Lower right hammer head above second 7 in date.

- Type 4.** Deer standing left, crescent above. VALUE.ME.AS.YOU.PLEASE.III
Three crowned hammers. I.AM.GOOD.COPPER.1737.

Die Varieties.

- 3-B (Crosby-21). R-7. PL close; no Roman numeral touches exergue.
3.1-B (Crosby-22). R-8. PL close; first and second Roman numerals touch exergue.

- Type 5.** Obverses 3, 3.1, and 3.2.
Broad axe. J.CUT.MY.WAY.THROUGH.

Die Varieties.

- 3-C (Crosby-23). R-8.
3.1-C (Crosby-24). R-7.
3.2-C (Crosby-25). R-7. PL apart; second and third Roman numerals touch exergue, second double punched.

- Type 6.** Obverses 3.1 and 3.2.
Broad axe. J.CUT.MY.WAY.THROUGH.1739.

Die Varieties.

- 3.1-D (Crosby unlisted; Garrett:1307). R-8.
3.2-D (Crosby-26). R-8.

- Type 7.** Wheel. THE.WHEEL.GOES.ROUND
Reverse C.

Die Varieties.

- 4-C (Crosby unlisted; Garrett:1306). Unique.